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"It is sociology in the grand manner. . . . The title might have been 'What the educated man should know about civilization,' or 'Civilization, its ups and downs' "

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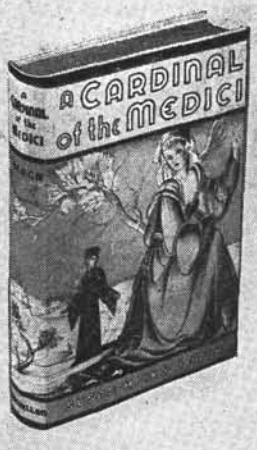
A Cardinal of The Medici

By MRS. HICKS BEACH



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By GLADYS HASTY CARROLL

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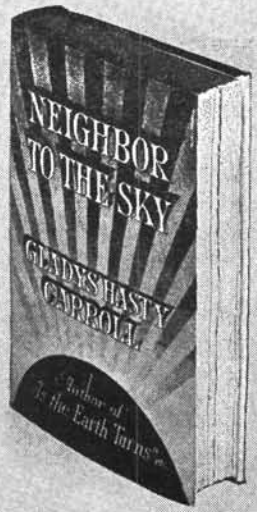

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Always Different, Always the Same

BY BERNARD DEVOTO

TWO books,* dissimilar enough, invite me to preach a sermon for the young. It begins in ignorance, since I have read only the first of the four earlier books by Mr. Rascoe listed opposite the title page of this one. But only the last chapter of his autobiography deals with the subjects to which Mr. Cowley's anthology is devoted, whereas the earlier chapters cover material common to us all and very useful to my principal point about the anthology.

BURTON RASCOE

To get to that point at once: Mr. Rascoe tells us that, at the age of thirteen, he had a job delivering morning newspapers in a Southern town. He got up hours before dawn, shocked himself awake with coffee, went down to the office and folded a couple of hundred newspapers, and then went out into the weather and hurled them at the subscribers' doors. How did he feel about this labor? He thought it was wonderful; it enabled him to earn money, it was adventurous, it gave him a good time, and he felt very proud of his achievement. Now if you will glance at "Look Homeward, Angel," you will find that when Eugene Gant had the same job it seemed to Mr. Thomas Wolfe an affront to the human spirit which produced suffering hardly equalled since Calvary, if equalled then. This disparity teaches us nothing whatever about child labor or the newspaper business but, I think, it establishes that there are differences in literary temperament.

My guess is that Mr. Rascoe, as a practising critic, has allowed for such differences; my first objection to the thinkers who contribute to Mr. Cowley's collection is that they do not. I find no absolutes in Mr. Rascoe's book, and I suspect that he has been an *ad hoc* critic, holding to experience and letting the system go by default, dealing with the literature that came to hand in terms of itself. That is the habit of mind revealed in his reminiscences, and I am constrained to believe that it must have determined his critical work. If so, he is an altogether different kind of critic from those who reject the writings of their immediate predecessors (and Mr. Rascoe's contemporaries) in "After the Genteel Tradition."

I shall be denouncing generalizations in a moment but I venture to make one now, that if there are marked differences between American literature twenty years ago and American literature as it now is, one of the most marked is the greater gusto of its earlier practitioners. Or some of them—for let us not forget that some of Mr. Rascoe's contemporaries held that literature should not make jokes. They were outnumbered, however, and there was a good deal of delight, excitement, high spirits, and sheer animal health in the literary world of 1920 and thereabouts. Some of the writers produced the most lugubrious books but they had a jovial time producing them, and much of that euphoria has gone from the literary scene today. I suspect that most of Mr. Cowley's colleagues would denounce it as levity unbefitting the present crisis; today a writer can enjoy himself only at peril of betraying the revolution. And yet, once said, this seems no novelty, for some thinkers in 1920 would have seen that he was betraying either Beauty or the Good Life, and this continuity is another point to make about the anthology.

Mr. Rascoe, in any event, appears to have had what Huck Finn called a noble good time. It carries over, in his autobiography, not only in the portion devoted to contemporary literature but even more markedly in the long and loving account of his boyhood. His book should be read for that account, not for its literary comments, which probably will be extended in later volumes. It recreates the Southern town of the late nineties and after as well as anything I can think of in our literature, and makes one regret that Mr. Rascoe has never tried his hand at fiction. It is full of typical experiences that anyone of Mr. Rascoe's generation must recognize as in part his own as well. It makes first-rate reading, and one reason why it does is Mr. Rascoe's healthy zest in the society to which he belonged. Whoever else has been at war with his environment, Mr. Rascoe was not.

Now much of Mr. Rascoe's experience parallels that of Mr. Floyd Dell; at a greater remove it resembles what happened to Mr. Sherwood Anderson, and at a still greater one what happened to Mr. Edgar Lee Masters. Here are four literary men who grew up in somewhat similar localities not a generation apart. All have written their autobiographies, yet four more dissimilar stories, four more unlike interpretations of experience,

Next Week

BULWARK OF THE REPUBLIC
By BURTON HENDRICK
Reviewed by Reed Powell

BLOOD ON THE MOON
By LINTON WELLS
Reviewed by Eugene Lyons

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* *BEFORE I FORGET. By Burton Rascoe. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1937. $3.*
AFTER THE GENTEEL TRADITION. Edited by Malcolm Cowley. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1937. $2.75.

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it would be difficult to imagine. Why? The question is simple and transparent, and the complete answer to it is immediate and almost automatic. But it is also important and the answer is a fundamental which one kind of literary thinking, the kind represented by Mr. Cowley's anthology, dismisses or completely disregards.

"After the Genteel Tradition" is a collection of short critical pieces by various hands. It contains an essay on Ernest Hemingway by John Peale Bishop which is spectacularly good, probably the best ever written on its subject, and one by Hildegarde Flanner on Jeffers and Millay which, though by no means so brilliant as Mr. Bishop's, is nevertheless a first-rate treatment of its subject. With that sentence I am going to dismiss those two pieces, for they differ from the others in that they treat the writers they discuss in terms of the writers and their books, whereas all the other pieces in the book treat their subjects in terms of a theoretical system composed of abstractions which arise out of sentiment but are supposed to arise out of the absolute nature of things—and that is a kind of criticism which interests me a good deal. As specimens of the kind, these essays vary from the excellent, as in Mr. Arvin on Sandburg and Mr. Cowley on Dos Passos, through the perfunctory, as Mr. Chamberlain on Dreiser, to the hopelessly and grotesquely bad, as Mr. Lionel Trilling on Willa Cather. They vary not only in quality but also in statement and description, and in the information available to the authors as well. There are vast discrepancies in what the authors say about their common period and even in their bases of judgments, but it was right to publish the essays together, for, no matter how inharmonious extrinsically, they are unified by common sentiments.

The book undertakes to get into critical focus the last generation of American literature—defined as those writers who (a) lived through the war or the boom or both, or (b) haven't written books in which boy meets Party organizer. The generation does not include Robert Frost until page 230, where Mr. Cowley acknowledges that "North of Boston" is likely to be read for a while longer, and both its map and its climate have changed quite a bit since the last time an anthology got it into focus. But the Artist is still in torment, and the talk about him is still carried on in a domain where words, instead of standing for things, have an entity and significance of their own. And the generation is again shown to have, in the mass, betrayed itself and come upon frustration; though, again, there is still hope. For once more the fiddles are tuning all over America. Last time they never got beyond the tuning, but this time it is no fake and we are going to have a symphony, though of course it has not yet begun. What kind of symphony are we going to have? Well, literature is going to be about society. Literature in America has never been about society. The best thing about the generation treated by this book is that it once promised to be about society. The worst thing about it is that it did not make good.

In all this there is no exterior unity, but there is an imposing one of internal sentiment, and the interesting thing is that it is identical with a powerful sentiment of the literature which these writers suppose they are repudiating. In order to pass judgment on individual writers, most of these critics have to characterize the period as a whole, and if you compare Mr. Louis Kronenberger's account of the times with Mr. Robert Cantwell's you will find serious incompatibilities, and if you then bring Mr. Peter Monro Jack's to bear upon the other two you are forced to decide that three periods, not one, are in dispute. Or take Mr. Cantwell's suspicion of the lower bourgeoisie which admired Coolidge and approves of Hearst; Mr. Cantwell resents them, presumably because they are the raw material from which (insert fascist) dictatorship may come. But when you get to Mr. Arvin, who writes about Carl Sandburg, the lower bourgeoisie have become the people and they look altogether different. Nor is there any reconciling one appearance with the other.

This, of course, was also a dilemma of the generation being dismissed. On the one hand the people are wonderful, for truth and justice abide with them, and they are exploited by the evil men, and it is they in whose name the great society must be built. But on the other hand, the people are both vulgar and dangercus; their preferences in literature and amusement distress the critic, they give themselves up to beastly if not bestial ambitions, they follow after material ends by expedient or even dishonest means, and they become the mob whose violence threatens everything the critic believes in and may well wreck the great society. The dilemma glistens in every chapter of this anthology but no one resolves it, and no one reflects that it frustrated much thought some years ago. It was the barrier, for instance, though Mr. Bernard Smith does not quite see it, which Mr. Van Wyck Brooks could not hurdle. Mr. Brooks demanded a genuine literature of American life, but whenever he encountered one he rejected it as coarse, vulgar, and unseemly. I cannot see that the group who dismiss him have improved upon his stand.

A fashion of the earlier enlightenment was to denounce American life as dull and contemptible, because it was materialistic, money-grubbing, standardized, inhibited, unrefined. The reason for this was that the Americans were inferior, if you belonged to that wing, or cowardly and puritanical, if you liked those assumptions better. In any event, this fashion refused to apply the bell-shaped curve to the human race and concluded that things must be otherwise in France. The condemnation of American life still holds, though the terms have shifted to those of social injustice, the explanation now is that society is disintegrating, and the conclusion is that things will be otherwise in socialism. Yesterday what ailed

(*Continued on page* 16)

From Men Who Died Deluded

By MAY SARTON

THIS is the time to speak to those who will come after,
To those who will climb the mountain-tops although
The continental clouds have crept down upon us
And we cannot tell any more how far there is to go.

This is the time to set our lips upon great horns and blow
Far down the years a note to reach them when
They are failing on the crest before the end,
To fall on their ears like a sweet hail from men

Who did not reach so far but blessed their march,
From men who died deluded far below the peak,
The self-destroyed, unwilling, blinded, caught
Yet who believed, yet who desired to speak—

Dying, to blow a horn for those who would come after,
Despairing, to send up one clear note from the edge of death
And as the victors falter to salute them proudly
With the hope we cherished with our final breath.

This is the time, this dark time, this bewildered
To give our mortal lives that the great peaceful places
May surely be attained by those who, when they falter,
Must be confronted by the living vision on our dead faces.

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Interpreting History

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS. Vol. I: Fluctuation of Forms of Art; II: Fluctuation of Systems of Truth, Ethics and Law; III: Fluctuation of Social Relationships, War, and Revolution. By Pitirim A. Sorokin. New York: American Book Co. 1937. $6 a volume, $15 the three volumes.

Reviewed by FRANK H. KNIGHT

IN the face of this monster parade of learning, the present reviewer is hesitant to speak. Apart from the necessary time and space limitations imposed by a review, and from plain ignorance, there is the further source of embarrassment that a fourth volume of the work itself, announced as "in preparation," will undoubtedly have for its main task explaining at length what the first three volumes are about. Indeed (since the work is here and has to be reviewed) the first comment may be that it is not too clear why the three volumes of materials and analysis have been given to the public in advance of the author's statement of "Basic Problems, Principles and Methods," the title announced for Volume Four.

The work before us is called on the jacket flaps, "an encyclopedic philosophy of history." It is sociology in the grand manner, perhaps its grandest so far. The same source places the author in the company of Comte, Spencer, Ranke, Pareto, Weber, and Spengler, and the author names also Vico in the first preface. The title might have been "What the educated man should know about civilization," or "Civilization, its ups and downs." It is a magnificent cram-book for a "comprehensive examination in art, philosophy, science, and politics." The main "advance" beyond previous similar works is the application, on such a scale, of the quantitative method. The three volumes contain one hundred and thirty-three statistical tables—up to ten pages or so in length—and sixty-three graphs of assorted types. Also a page sample of coefficients of correlation, out of a larger number said to have been computed. This from the man who has sarcastically criticized statistical sociology as practised by others, notably the authors of "Recent Social Trends in the United States," published while the present work was in the making.

The theme is the "fluctuations" of cultural forms between two extremes or limiting types designated as "ideational" and "sensate." These terms are defined at some length, but have no very definite meaning; "religious" and "materialistic" would as accurately express the contrast. Numerous intermediate or mixed types are described under various names in connection with various phases of the cultural process. Of these the "idealistic" occurs most frequently and is also treated as "ideal"; its characterization is especially meagre and vague.

The treatment deals comparatively with specified aspects or elements into which culture is analyzed (without pretense of exhaustiveness). Volume I takes up the fine arts individually, including literature and criticism; Volume II, fourteen aspects of philosophical, scientific, technological, ethical, and juridical change; Volume III, some seven or eight phases of social and political relationships (one chapter, rather weak, on economic cycles), and war. Most of the twenty-odd topical divisions of the study cover Western civilization from about 600 B.C. to about 1920, with fairly large excursions into primitive, Oriental, and near-Eastern cultures. A staggering amount of material has been

ABSTRACT FORMS (*Picasso*)*

examined, classified, rated, and in most cases tabulated and graphed by the author and a number of collaborators. In addition to primary materials, which include "innumerable" works of art, philosophy and science, documents, etc., over a thousand authorities are cited. (The author has not been reticent in calling attention to the labor and expense involved in achieving "thoroughness.")

Questions and criticisms are suggested at many points, and some of them fairly serious; but in the main the procedure followed is candidly described, with recognition of its limitations, and is apparently free from crude fallacy or bias. It is, I think, good work of its kind, judged by any standards of reasonable expectation. The question in the reader's mind will rather be to what such a job finally amounts. On this, I would deprecate too uncritical rejection or acceptance. Certainly the numerical results do not really measure anything, but the same is true of so useful a rating as the candlepower of a lamp, if taken rigorously. The general conclusions are not startling. They do not diverge greatly from the answers which would be given to the same questions by a competent college graduate with a fair equipment of courses in general history and a few historical specialties, or by nearly any well read person. But the assembly and presentation of the materials, and the quantitative analysis as well, are extremely interesting, and also highly informative, if viewed intelligently. No one knows enough about what is "important" in this field to be very finical on that score. A few of the reviewer's private notes and queries may perhaps be mentioned.

First; it is the *elements* in culture, and their fluctuations between opposite poles or limits, which are dealt with, generally expressed as percentages; aggregate indices are sometimes given, but nothing is said about them. There is no direct suggestion of defining or measuring culture or civilization as a whole, and no clear reference to *its* ups and downs. This surely is a thing not to be ignored, particularly the mysterious and crucial phenomenon of general decadence. Secondly, there are only passing references to material, geographic, or economic influences in history. This is a good fault, in view of the tendency greatly to over-emphasize such forces, but it is surely an omission. Where these influences are mentioned it is to treat such notions as a mark of the degeneracy of the modern "sensate phase" of culture! Thirdly, and perhaps most important: my primary interest in the work, from the title, was to learn something about the possible meaning of "dynamics" in sociology, and particularly whether the term, and related terms taken over from physical mechanics, can have more than a figurative analogy of meaning in the two fields. On this point, the methodological discussion (see Volume I, Chapter IV and Volume III, Chapter IV) is quite disappointing. (I shall look forward to Volume IV with hope for more light.) The only theory or causal explanation of social change which is given is simply the factual statement that it is inevitable, a law of life, that every cultural form bears in itself the seeds of its own destruction. The author is especially emphatic in frequently repudiating any "linear" interpretation, *i.e.*, any theory of inevitable progress. (Spencer is usually mentioned; this reaction against evolutionism is of course a dominant note in current anthropological literature.) However, he

* "The twentieth century shows a conspicuous reaction against Visualism (Sensate art) but as yet has not found the Ideational style. Its art . . . is marked by the usual incoherency of such a transitory period. . . . Whether this reaction of the twentieth century is the sign of the end of the Visual period and of the coming long-time domination of the Idealational style remains to be seen. In the totality of the evidences given in this work, I am inclined to interpret it in that sense." Picture and caption from "Social and Cultural Dynamics."

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just as emphatically rejects the notion of cyclical recurrence. This leaves the third possibility, "variable or creative recurrence," as the position accepted and defended.

Finally: it might go without saying that the real animus back of a philosophy of history is to make history an instrument of prophecy—along with more or less sermonizing. Professor Sorokin holds that the present crisis in Western culture is far deeper than is generally supposed; the "present-day sensate phase" is in a state of decay; in particular, he considers "the days of responsible but free social investigation to be numbered for the present." And the next phase will be brutal and bloody, "a collectivism of the hard-labor prison," "a solidarity of the executioners." But all this, he says, "does not make me at all pessimistic." For beyond the hard transition period "there looms not an abyss of death, but a mountain peak of life." Our "over-stuffed, after-dinner utopia," whose product has come to be "poison gas rather than fresh air" will no doubt give place to a new ideational culture with the absolute values indispensable for disciplining man, who under the sensate phase has conquered nature but degraded himself. Apart from the distant roseate vision our guess is in fair agreement with Professor Sorokin; as to that,—Great is faith; great be the believer's reward!

Frank H. Knight is professor of economics at the University of Chicago.

Hapsburg Empress

MARIA THERESA: The Last Conservative. By Constance Lily Morris. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

OF Maria Theresa most readers remember that, a beautiful young queen in distress, she appealed, and not in vain, to the chivalry of Hungary to save her throne for the infant she held up in her arms. Some also remember from eighteenth century memoirs, a stout, elderly autocrat who ruled with matriarchal severity a court grown, to the pained astonishment of the easy-going Viennese, the most rigidly puritan in Europe. The puzzling contrast is only in the pages of the historians, not in the facts of history. The empress who ruled the Austrian lands from 1740 to 1780 was a consistent character in the tradition of her Hapsburg ancestors, brave, conscientious, practical, narrowly limited, self opinionated, obstinate. She probably saved the power of the Austrian Hapsburgs from extinction, she contributed notably to the building of the Austro-Hungarian empire into a quasi-modern state, she helped create a distinctively Austrian culture, and to bring the old regime in Europe to that bloom of perfection which precedes decay, and she did all this without being either a romantically attractive figure or a particularly able or intelligent ruler.

THE MONASTERY OF MELK ON THE DANUBE—*Visited by Maria Theresa.*

This biography of her, based on the best modern authorities, has much to commend it. It is carefully documented, and buttressed by an impressive bibliography, three useful maps, and several genealogical tables. It has a good index. It has drawn on a wide range of sources, including unpublished manuscript material (of no dazzling importance), and it makes a conscientious attempt to present a comprehensive picture of Maria Theresa's activities at home and abroad, and a balanced, sensible, impartial estimate of her character.

It would be pleasanter not to have to insist on such a book's defects. Occasional mistakes are almost unavoidable in covering so broad a field, and the omission and inclusion of details always presents a more or less insoluble problem. After the second chapter on the earlier history of the Hapsburgs, which is so inaccurate and confusing that it would have been better to leave it out, there are no indefensible errors. But the inclusion of so much military and diplomatic detail was surely a major error of judgment. The tangled story of eighteenth century war and diplomacy has often been told before. It is unrelieved here by literary brilliance, and unexcused by fresh material or original interpretation. And it crowds the rest of the book so that one never gets a really clear and vivid picture of Maria Theresa herself, or of her polyglot realms and the changes she saw in them. It is as if Lytton Strachey had felt obliged to discuss the background of the Crimean War, the strategy of Kitchener on the Nile, and the details of Irish Land Reform when he wrote of Victoria. This is a painstaking and, no doubt, for the patient beginner, a useful book, but it might have been much more had it attempted less.

Gothic Legend

BECKFORD. By Guy Chapman. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. $4.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

THE author of "Vathek" has somehow escaped the offices of that type of biographer who aims principally to exploit sensation. Actually (on the showing of Guy Chapman, his latest biographer), William Beckford led an almost fabulously romantic life compounded of many of the elements that were to lend glamour to the careers of Byron, Poe, and Oscar Wilde. Born the heir to millions, distinguished by a manner of mingled hauteur and charm, accomplished in singing, dancing, writing, and musical composition, he captivated London by the age of twenty. A few years later he was to be an outcast. Clouds of disapproval gathered over his diabolical Oriental studies, his alleged experiments in black magic (mesmerism was in the air), his lavish pagan entertainments at Fonthill, and his liaison with his cousin's wife. Finally he was accused (on strong evidence, though without proof) of an offense against a young boy. Beckford's other sins John Bull could forgive, but his lapse from normality was too much: Beckford became an exile. The continent was his—Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, Naples—but England could not easily be regained. His proffer of political services was snubbed. "Vathek" was admired critically, but Britain's outraged heart was not to be wooed by French idiom and Oriental fantasy. Regarded coldly on his return, Beckford immured himself in an authentic Gothic castle (none of your "gimcrack" villas like Walpole's) at Fonthill, where, surrounded by the rarest art treasures and attended by the queerest people, he became a legend. Financial losses occurred, and the legend moved to Bath. Gradually, public indignation at Beckford's sins tapered off into tolerance of an eccentric connoisseur whose devotion to the arts partly redeemed his warped character.

Mr. Chapman provides these facts. If he had chosen to spray them with journalism, he might have made his book a lurid, best-selling biography. As it is, he does not flinch from unsavory episodes in Beckford's life, but his main purpose is to set down a meticulously accurate biographical chronicle. To this end, he has tunnelled through mountains of data, the most important of which he has tabulated in the appendices. In passing he has been able to correct earlier commentators. Nevertheless scholarship has not dried up the well of his humor or dulled his very fine word-sense. From a literary point of view, "Beckford" is one of the ripest biographies of the year. In a modest preface Mr. Chapman speaks of how much still remains to be done on Beckford's life, but for all save the most abandoned specialist this book must be sufficient.

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An American Tragedy

HART CRANE: THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN POET. By Philip Horton. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by GORHAM MUNSON

THE two qualities most demanded of a biographer of Hart Crane, the frenzied poet who jumped to death in the Caribbean five years ago, are understanding and balance. Mr. Philip Horton exhibits these qualities beyond one's most sanguine expectation in his full length narrative of the torments and achievements of Hart Crane. None of Crane's friends understood him so well as his biographer has, a principal reason being that they had not complete access to the childhood and family background of the poet. His friends had, of course, guessed at an "Œdipus complex," thus accounting for the poet's diabolization of his father, his idealization of his mother, and his homosexuality, but this was crude and amateur psychoanalysis. Mr. Horton is much better informed and more subtle and profound in his tracing of the insoluble psychological tragedy of Crane.

The key to Crane's character is, in Mr. Horton's words, "the lack of security, both spiritual and worldly, which, like an interior cavity hollowed by fear, distorted the surfaces and substrata of his life with fatal displacements." Crane never knew the security of a home. His father neglected him in the early years, and his parents were often in a state of ugly tension. Violent scenes and divorce actions fell with cruel force upon the extremely sensitive and defenceless child.

Never during Crane's life did his seismic family situation quiet down, even though his parents were divorced during his adolescence (they were on the point of remarrying each other very soon afterwards). The poet was always breaking with his father, being reconciled, breaking again; similarly with his mother. There were upheavals about money. The family was prosperous, but Hart was "strapped" much of the time, and undertook many disheartening makeshift jobs such as peddling Maxfield Parrish prints from house to house. Too early exposed to the treacheries of human relations, Crane was haunted throughout his life by the fear of betrayal the while he yearned for unqualified affection. The last years were dissolute in the extreme and verged on madness.

Mr. Horton's psychological insight is matched by his good judgment. It is comparatively easy for a sophisticated writer to avoid being "clinical" or sentimental or moralistic, but it is exceedingly difficult to avoid confusion between the life and the poetry, as the history of commentary on Poe attests. Mr. Horton does not get confused because, it presently appears, he is an excellent critic of Crane's visionary poems. He calmly elucidates their intention and meaning—in so far as their meaning can be described—without a trace of the polemical spirit that necessarily marked Crane's young champions ten or fifteen years ago. Crane is not yet accepted by the official literary mind, but no matter now that he is dead.

In a single sentence Mr. Horton contrives to throw light upon both the life and the poetry. Crane, he says, "was at once possessed by the desire to discover an absolute faith and by an abhorrence of all rational discipline." His poems from 1922 onwards were, in a sense "mystically" explained by him, intended not to mean but to be; they were to be absolute experiences for the reader like those "varieties of religious experience" Crane underwent several times. He believed in

HART CRANE

the revelation, in the Word that Uttered would change Life. In this belief in a faith without works, or rather in a faith that automatically would perform works, Crane was an incorrigible romanticist, both in poetry and in living. Apart from discipline in verse-craft, he fled precipitantly from all disciplines, rational or mystical; few lives have been more wildly undisciplined. His friends could tolerate his genius but the record shows that hardly any of them could long endure the pathological violence of his behavior during the last five years. Their regard for Crane remained what it had been, but flesh and nerves could not stand the pace of entertaining him under one's roof. *"Ce n'est pas un homme; c'est un ouragan,"* it used to be remarked of him by his friends in "transition valley" in Putnam County, N. Y.

Yet "the roaring boy" was a very lovable person. He did not cultivate an "arty" temperament or the femininities of sexual abnormality. He was bleedingly honest, affectionate, supercharged with vitality, and absolutely smitten by the love of poetry. He was absolutely smitten, and that made him modest, made him in his conversation a communicant of the supreme excitement of art, made him in the end despair of life when he realized his creative gift had been dissipated. He was smitten absolutely, and that initiated him into moments of greatness in his own poetic labors.

Pattern of Destiny

THE RING IS CLOSED. By Knut Hamsun. New York: Coward-McCann & Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by PHILLIPS D. CARLETON

THIS new book by Knut Hamsun fuses his several philosophies. His chief character here, Abel, has reached the center of indifference. He desires nothing for himself—he has been in the depths—but he does feel a pity for those about him who still strive for place and position and are eternally grieved or disappointed. He is a Hamlet-like figure frustrate in action, but nonetheless untroubled over his incapacity. His fortune and his life he gives away with no hope of return; he shrugs away both ingratitude and malice. Yet there is in him none of the desperate feeling of the futility of living that the suicidal hero of "Chapter the Last" knew. Life is to be accepted and enjoyed.

The setting of the novel is the familiar one of Hamsun's novels—the small fjord village, a busy microcosm, where the little figures rush about on their own peculiar errands and are tossed up or down on the long floods of time. Class distinctions between druggist's clerk, lawyer, and landowner are drawn tight and sharp only to disappear under sudden good fortune, fierce young men grow old and sit in the sun, the disasters of love and marriage are submerged under the waves of the years. Abel is the son of the local lighthouse keeper, early alienated by long sea voyages, who drifts back to town after his father's death to live on his patrimony. Through his eyes the town lives, busy, but as remote as a town seen under water. The sharp desperations, the petty ambitions, the slanders, and the gossiping become almost like the motions in a dream. One sees, understands, but one also sees that this town is a pattern of man's universe, a pattern, says Hamsun, without meaning save in its own movement.

The tide of Hamsun's interests has broadened from an intense but often erratic interest in an individual to a wise but gentle preoccupation with the whole realm of human relationships. This, possibly his last novel, belongs to the genre of philosophical novels that deal, at least by implication, with man's destiny on this earth.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Defining American Literature

THERE are two ways in which the literature of the United States may be defined in its relations to world literature, of which the first is important, yet does not go far beyond the obvious.

America is, after all, a transplanted Europe, and American literature is an articulation on this soil and under these skies of European (and to a slight but considerable extent, of Asiatic) ideas crossing the ocean in great waves of influence that beat into sensitive American minds.

In the earliest days of the Republic, for example, the intellectual currents set up by English Deism are strong; while a little later the Romantic Movement, which was transforming European emotions, flows in from every important source and colors American life from the seaboard to the frontier. If the sober thinkers, like Franklin, responded to the ideas of Deism, the novelists and essayists, such as Cooper, Irving, and later Hawthorne and Poe, react to the egoisms or the expansions of Romanticism and reproduce with strong American variations the romantic literature of Europe. Were there space, it would be easy to name dozens of specific European excitements of the intellect which set up by direct flow or an induced electricity new charges and new kinds of literature in America.

Viewed this way, American literature is a vigorous colonial product, responding and reacting from its own vitality to the cultural charges of the European power house.

But this, though a necessary preliminary, is the least interesting and least penetrating view of American literature. The waves from the mother countries were inevitable if books and the right men crossed the waters. But what happened to these waves in what was after all a new and strange environment, and what new waves of influence have rolled back?

The best summary perception of American literature will be had by those willing to forgo the general for the particular. More can be learned from a few individuals and a few types of literary expression, than from a history of American writing. The definition of American literature which can be deduced from the characteristics and the influence of a few writers is much too narrow to cover American reading. Yet it is surely true that the traits of a national literature must be drawn not from what a nation reads but from what it creates.

I shall choose, therefore, for my analysis the work of four individuals and then, to get a broader base for generalization, shall add a tentative characterization of what may fairly be called the most vital mass literature of the Americans.

Emerson would have been an original, creative mind in any civilization, but it is not his originality, it is what his creative spirit made articulate for his country and his time that is important here. The current of European idealism in him rose through new springs. He was a scholar and a specialist in religion who lived in an expanding civilization. What in Europe and in his own Massachusetts was a revolt against dogma and against codes, what in America generally was crude energy, he transformed into a faith in the power of man to make each day a new beginning and into a confidence that good (which he did not too sharply define) was more fecund than evil (which he regarded as a wild beast that the superior man could inevitably subdue). He brought idealism to the frontier and offered it a continent. The comfort-seeking nineteenth century outmoded him, yet his ideas are coming home again in the area which twentieth century science has left open for religion.

Hawthorne is the perfect example of the metabolism of an American imagination at work upon a mood which did not originate here. He was a romanticist strongly attracted, like all that European generation, to history, but in strong skeptical revolt against the easy moral theories of the age of amelioration. The weakening chains of Calvinism, which had bound together the impulses of the American will to subdue a continent, left him unshackled, but brooding. He represents that karma from the moral uncertainty of the American past, which still creeps upon our long conflict between idealism and the pursuit of the dollar. Sin for him was the pathology of individuals in a country that had never reconciled its present with its past, or with its future. A little too soon and with bad models yet in a golden style, he wrote the tragedy of our Lincolns, our Wilsons, our Poes, and our Grants.

Thoreau also was a scholar, a first-rate scholar in the great classics of world civilization, if too much of a transcendentalist ever to become a scholar in the natural sciences where most of his energies were spent. He got his idea of the significance which lies behind facts from Emerson, and thus indirectly from the European idealists, but his application of it to the business of living was his own. Here he was entirely himself, a deeply religious, intensely self-sufficient, and acutely suspicious Yankee. He saw life in a new country being swung from its natural vitalities of satisfying experience, into accumulation, its neck going under the burdens which had made life unendurable for all but the privileged in Europe. He saw economic experiments under way which left the essential out of account, which was that man should learn how to do what he really wanted. He saw the industrial revolution passing into the phase where it was to set new and one-sided standards of living. Against these world ideas, he put his own life which he lived as an experiment—and could so live it in a New England where intense individualism was still a pioneer virtue. He wrote a book on how he lived without either despising or yielding to the machine, and an essay on what he proposed to do if the dictators should proclaim the state more important than the individual soul.

Walt Whitman took all literature and all the brotherhood of man for his province. The first he read badly; the second he celebrated in its passing, not in its eternal, aspects. The *en masse*, the democrat, the noble workman, the sweaty pioneer he wrote of, were actors in only one scene of a great drama. They seemed to be the future to a mid-century American because democracy in a country with an unsettled West made them not only possible but types of success. It was with a vision differently conditioned, but equally short-sighted, that Marx saw his classless proletariat. What the Civil War left of Whitman's dream, the industrialization and exploitation of the United States ended. Yet he dreamed it so long and with such reality for his imagination to play upon, that his rough lines were able to break the conventions which still made poetry and all higher literature aristocratic. The American experiment in a society run for the benefit of the average man, which still continues from Jefferson to Roosevelt, got its heroic articulation from Whitman. And it was a rough, crude, vulgar heroism belonging to men who never forget their stomachs or their sexual organs, and so transferable to whatever in the future shall be the expression of the common people.

Last — journalism. The indisputable contribution of the American to world articulateness is journalism—a method of making news sensational, so that, like literature, it will appeal to the emotions. The excesses of sensationalism I am not concerned with here. My point, as far as America is concerned, is this: that the quickened intelligence of a pioneer country, the high recurrence of movement among its populations, and the interest in events in a continent which for three centuries has been in constant and rapid process of change, made the art of journalism as inevitable here as it was native to circumstance. In this there is no foreign

(Continued on page 17)

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Letters to the Editor: *Proposal to Publishers; Pretenders Then and Now*

See America First

SIR:—*SRL* editorializing May 15th; " . . . Proposal: Let the publisher forgo his annual trip to Europe . . . get out into the American hinterland for a month and see what is being written there and who is writing it. . . . Talk to the librarian, newspaper editor, to the bookseller. Find out who is writing books in the town. Get the young men and women in for cocktails. . . ."

That is a grand idea. I'm all for it. Your publisher will come to Camden, New Jersey, no doubt. I am the bookseller he will see. If he will give me a cocktail, too, I will arrange to have the young men and women come up. I offer the following:

1. The author of a juvenile. The book is about George Washington—"Written so children will understand it." The author was too busy to make illustrations for it but a local sign painter did some for him on red cardboard. A Natural.

2. A poet. Her work is Dickens's "Christmas Carol" in verse. It rhymes.

3. Another poet (if I can find her). A Whitman admirer who came in last Summer in a trailer. She made frequent visits to Walt Whitman's house and wrote a 300-page poem in the manner of Walt Whitman about Mary Baker Eddy. She proves that Whitman thought like Mrs. Eddy—or maybe it was Mrs. Eddy who thought like Whitman. At any rate, it was a good poem. I did not know then that the publishers would come to Camden, so I sent her to The Macmillan Company. That ungracious outfit never so much as sent me a note of thanks.

4. The author of a mystery thriller in which the murderer is a sculptor. The corpse is covered with chromium plating and allowed to stand in the studio. The detectives think it is a statue and give up the search until* . . . I cannot give away the plot. Your publisher will have to pay money for that one.

These are just a few of my long list. I am in a position to provide as many guests for his cocktail party as his hotel suite will accommodate. Please see to it that Camden is included in his itinerary.

JOSEPH PRAISSMAN.

Whitman Galleries,
Camden, N. J.

Out of Antioch

SIR:—An amateur of criticism and of history hesitates to carp at so well-informed a reviewer as Fletcher Pratt, but on reading Lion Feuchtwanger's "The Pretender," I cannot help feeling he has missed the point. His knowledge of ancient history seems prodigious—can it be that he has failed to keep up with modern history? I should not call "The Pretender" a *roman à cléf*, but surely there are analogies between its main events and characters and certain fantastic gentlemen and their doings in modern Europe. Do not the flooding of Apamea, the framed trial of the Christians, the heroic behavior of John of Patmos at the trial, the night of proscriptions against the pretender's early friends—don't they remind Mr. Pratt of anything? Oh, come on, Mr. Pratt—guess! Surely you've seen Trebonius's picture in the papers, in all his medals and regalia, and the slave Knops twisted with his slave's hate, and even the stuffed toga Terence who only really exists before an audience. Come out of Antioch, Mr. Pratt, and read the morning paper!

HELEN RIPLEY NOYES.

Stamford, Conn.

* As Mr. Praissman may not know, this plot was used by no less a mystery writer than Dorothy Sayers, for a story in "Lord Peter Views the Body."—Editor.

"IT'S YOUR MUSE AGAIN."

"Heaven Born"

SIR:—I had a subscription with you which expired with the issue of April 17th. I have not renewed and yet I have received the April 24th issue. The lapse of subscription is intentional, because I do not like to grovel and your semi-new editor, Mr. DeVoto, is making me do so more and more. The climax came when he offered an offensive cover telephoto of the bastard son of a British prostitute, himself a criminal and expected to continue in that role, writing his memoirs and hailed by Rebecca West as a "heaven-born" writer—I don't think *that* heaven starts with a capital.

I have wondered why I have not liked to read Rebecca West—now I know. Why drag the British sewers for mental pabulum? But Rebecca West's "heaven-born" writer is only the worst of the procession. Many who have made your front page recently belong in the same class, though possibly not quite so low. True, there have also been many of real value and much interest to me, but slime is pernicious and it clings, and I prefer not to have it so inescapable when I want intelligent review.

So count me off as a subscriber—and I'm somewhat regretful too, for there is much that I like in *S.R.L.*

HELEN KLINE JAGGAR.

Burlingame, Cal.

"Nymph"

SIR:—As a college senior, hoping to enter publishing following graduation this June, I must take exception to your editorial of May 8, entitled "Nymph." The person whom you describe is, in my experience, quite non-existent. I know some editorial writers on college papers, and am more or less acquainted with six or seven hundred fairly representative college students. Among these I know of very few who could be even faintly identified with the egotistical and impractical fool of your editorial.

It is, no doubt, a severe tribulation to have to listen to a callow youngster tell one how to run one's business, and no one can be blamed for resenting it. But the college man, as I know him, though he may be inconsiderate, over-critical, and stuffed with too many good principles and not enough practical experience, applies the same hard tests to his own work as he does to the work of others.

GEORGE R. BACON.

Amherst College,
Amherst, Mass.

General John Bidwell

SIR:—I am engaged in the preparation of a biography of General John Bidwell, "prince of California pioneers." I should be grateful for information any of your readers might be able to give me on this subject.

JOHN L. NAYLON.

3826 South Benton,
Kansas City, Mo.

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Obstacles to Neutrality

In America

THE TRAGIC FALLACY. A Study of America's War Policies. By Mauritz A. Hallgren. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $4.

Reviewed by PAYSON S. WILD

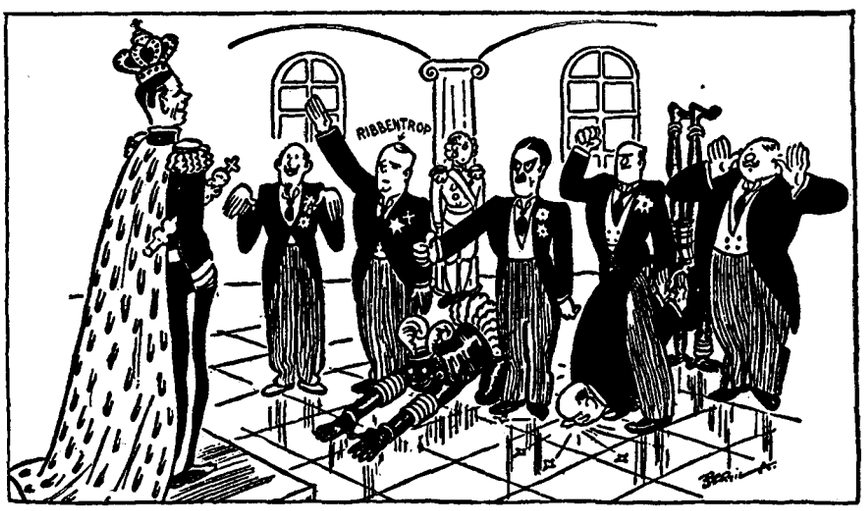
THERE is a naive assumption current throughout the republic that America is somehow more pacific than those strange and devilish foreigners who live across the oceans. It has been the American habit to assume an air of self-righteousness in international affairs and to applaud vigorously when our Presidents, as all of them frequently have done, deliver moral homilies to the misguided nations abroad who persist in their nasty bellicose tactics. To the task of exposing the fallacy of these smug assumptions Mr. Hallgren devotes himself not only with vigor but with the documents and the figures. Doubtless the Army and Navy General Staffs and all the "patriots" will brand Mr. Hallgren as a menace but the epithets will not undermine the cogency of his argument that a gullible Congress and a complacent populace are dupes for plans and policies which are leading us down the fatal path toward a "defensive" war to be waged in foreign parts.

Mr. Hallgren is not straining to be sensational; there is no bombast and very little venom in this book, for he lets the record speak for itself. The fact that the author explains imperialism entirely in economic terms, apparently swallowing whole the simple Leninist analysis, and very definitely implies that we went to war in 1917 primarily "to save prosperity at home and American investments abroad" need not detract from the great significance of this work as an exposé of the aims and schemes of those supposedly charged with the "defense" of this nation.

Very early in the work the author neatly explodes the myth that any power has the desire, and what is more, the ability to invade the United States. Citing with skill and with effect the American experience with the A. E. F. when it took a year and a half and all the world's spare tonnage, amply protected by the British and American navies, to deposit a formidable force on the friendly shores of France, the author deftly disposes of the bogey of aggression. For what purpose, then, are we pouring billions into a military and naval establishment which admittedly is to be employed in somebody else's waters and territory?

In the course of his analysis, Mr. Hallgren demonstrates that in our foreign policy, in our attitude at the various naval conferences, and in our war plans we are just as "selfish," just as provocative as any other state. While we give lip-service to peace and prate of the "good neighbor," the ghost of Admiral Mahan is still with us, influencing us to adopt the tragic route of navalism, imperialism, and militarism. Probably the most revealing and important part of the book is that devoted to the preparations now afoot and afloat for our "defensive" war against Japan, a war "inevitable" on no logical grounds. Mr. Hallgren predicts the sad train of events which may occur when and if the Philippines are attacked, the dubious premise upon which so much of our "defense" strategy is based: American "honor" will have been affronted, we must defend our "interests," and so we shall be embarked upon a futile and costly war, "defending" half a billion dollars' worth of trade at the price of billions in money and no end of human life.

Mr. Hallgren has done a great service to the real interests of his fellow Americans, who, if they had sense enough, would rally behind the feeble peace lobby and demand an explanation of these grim facts from those responsible for the country's destiny. Unhappily too many of us are "suckers" who assume that so many engines of war are really necessary.



Tidningen, Stockholm

PICTURESQUE VARIETY REPLACES ETIQUETTE

The German Ambassador honors George VI by the Nazi salute, the Soviet Ambassador raises the customary clenched fist, and others do their best to represent their countries in an adequate and dignified way. From "Flood-Light on Europe."

In Europe

FLOOD-LIGHT ON EUROPE, A Guide to the Next War. By Felix Wittmer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. $3.75.

Reviewed by EUGENE LYONS

FELIX WITTMER, who lectures on foreign affairs at New Jersey Teachers College and elsewhere, decided "that there is a need for a guide to European political affairs." Existing books, he felt, are either too technical, too sketchy, or too biased, and "not one of them fills the place of a general, somewhat popular outline on the subject" such as his lecture audiences craved. These "just demands of the public" he has endeavored to meet in "Flood-Light on Europe, a Guide to the Next War."

It was a mandate to appall the hardiest of outliners of knowledge and Mr. Wittmer has carried it through bravely and with a large measure of success. In 500-odd pages he has compassed all current problems of all current European nations, with extensive excursions to other continents and other epochs, forays on the future, "intermezzos" (as he calls them) on political phobias and racial theories, and a running fire of amusing anecdote. Encyclopedic in scope and journalistic in manner, the book has many of the virtues and most of the faults of a series of elementary lectures on a theme that does not lend itself readily to elementary treatment.

Perhaps because Mr. Wittmer has no ascertainable philosophy of history to steer by, his guidance through the maze of Europe past, present, and future is a little dizzying. Without a reasonable bias or predilection the historian or the journalist is in danger of losing himself in the chaos of unsorted information. At any rate, no pattern of development emerges from Mr. Wittmer's ambitious narrative. Having acquired a vast miscellany of facts and opinions, the reader is better informed but not much wiser than he was at the outset. Mr. Wittmer, in his eagerness to avoid biases of his own, tends to accept the biases of other writers, occasionally when these are mutually exclusive. Both the friends and the enemies

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of the major European political and social philosophies — bolshevism, fascism, democracy, Aryanism, etc.—will find some of their fondest assumptions treated as fact in this book. "It all depends from which angle we look at events," the author asserts in some places and implies throughout.

Like so many popularizers of knowledge, this book suffers from a dogged determination to be sprightly and entertaining. The tragic content of European affairs on the edge of "the next war" makes the effort rather wearing. This reviewer, at least, would have preferred the bitter pill of Europe's and the world's complicated troubles with less sugar-coating. Mr. Wittmer speaks of the Great Powers as "big shots" and the little ones as "small fry." Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and others are "midgets on stilts." Chapter heads, and in lesser measure the style of the whole book, are smart rather than straightforward: "The Tailor Turns Athlete," "Poker —Deuces Wild," "Revolution en Wagons-Lits," "Pink Fades Out," "Monroe in Yellow," etc. The complexities of the immense subject are raised, it seems to me, to a higher degree of confusion by this acrobatic straining for effect.

Another by-product of the anxiety to be "popular" is Mr. Wittmer's inclination to clutter his story with truisms. He informs us that " in the Balkans, as well as in Europe, or anywhere in the world, one finds all kinds of people," and that "nobody has yet succeeded in satisfactorily defining what might be called the human soul." His final thought on the Jewish problem is this: "Human history has not been much more than a chain of attempts at doing the right thing. Who knows what the right thing is? Who is nearest to it? We are still groping in the dark. . . ." His summary of the Soviet experiment is no less platitudinous: "Thus in all likelihood the final verdict on the Russian Revolution will be that it was another of mankind's great and worthy struggles in an uphill fight, but that, like anything else human beings have attempted to achieve, it is far from being faultless." The volume is studded with such generalizations —most of them, alas, too terribly true.

The book, however, does summarize the European scene more fully and more readably than any other recent volume of which I am aware. It does not pretend to indicate when the next war will come or who will fight whom, but, as Mr. Wittmer says:

> It is hoped that he who now and then peruses a chapter of this guide will be able to analyze foreign news somewhat better than before. If we knew the outcome beforehand there would be little fun in attending races, a baseball game, or a chess tournament. There is something similarly hazardous in the gruesome game of the Powers, no matter how much we may dislike it.

Eugene Lyons, himself long a foreign correspondent, is the editor of the recently published "We Cover the World."

Is Canada American?

CANADA. By André Siegfried. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1937. $3.

CANADA CAVALCADE. By Robert H. Davis. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by MERRILL DENISON

THE unabating charm of the five little Dionne girls, Lord Tweedsmuir's full dress visit to the White House, and the recent threat to Ontario's American-owned automobile industry by emissaries of Mr. Lewis's CIO have kept Canada more constantly in the public mind than during any period since the World War.

These two books give one a very comprehensive picture of the country as it is today. While Robert Davis's "Cavalcade" is a compilation of his daily newspaper columns, its wealth of anecdote make it both readable and interesting. Frankly a prejudiced reporter in his admiration for things Canadian, the author writes glowingly of things that are likely to interest tourists from the south—the romantic charms of Habitant Quebec, the unspoiled beauty of the northern fishing streams, the glories of Vancouver Island's famous flower gardens. Written casually and with personal relish, "Canada Cavalcade" should add to the mighty flood of tourists who troop northward in increasing number each succeeding summer.

"Canada," by André Siegfried, is much meatier stuff. Delving deep below the surface, it is probably the best informed, most discerning, and most sympathetic brief study of Canada as a political and economic entity that has ever appeared in print. A sequel to his earlier work "The Race Question in Canada," the present book is a later estimate of Canada's chances of continued national development. Completely informed, writing with an objective detachment but sympathetic understanding which, in all, likelihood, only a Frenchman could attain, Siegfried explores fully all the influences which have moulded Canada's development in the past and which seem likely to influence her future. He sees her occupying a valuable position in world affairs as the lone political associate of Europe on the American continent and as the one American voice in European councils. Without Canada occupying her paradoxical position he sees Great Britain becoming entirely absorbed in European affairs: with her part of the British Commonwealth he sees the United States, consciously or unconsciously, forced to take a more lively part in world affairs than there would otherwise be any need to take.

It is not a book, I think, that will be very popular in Canada if for no other

ROBERT H. DAVIS

reason than its opening sentence: "At the beginning, in the middle and the end of any study of Canada, one must reiterate that Canada is American." While this statement is entirely true, it is not one Canadians enjoy reading unless it be tempered with equivocation. And if one can find a flaw in Siegfried's brilliant analysis, it would be on the emphasis he places on American influence. It seems to me that he underestimates it in the eighteenth century and overestimates it in the twentieth, particularly in the post-war period. It is important to remember the part played by the United Empire Loyalists in creating Canada's national outlook. Leaving this country immediately following the Revolution, they took with them a bitter hatred of all things American. They formed the basis of Canada's English population and imposed an attitude whose effects persist to this day.

On the other hand, a somewhat mistaken estimate is made of the effect of increasing American investments north of the unbridled frontier. In common with most observers, Siegfried seems to feel that these indicate an increase in American influence; that they must weaken the British system. The exact opposite seems to be the case as has been demonstrated during the General Motors strike. Except for the small investments made to exploit Canada's local markets, most American capital is attracted beyond the border because Canada is another country and as such can serve as an export base from which American industry may penetrate foreign markets more readily. Under these circumstances, American investments tend to strengthen the status quo rather than to weaken it. It would appear that Canada is less of "a precarious creation" than the astute Siegfried believes and that her chances of carrying on under present conditions are about as good as could be imagined.

Merrill Denison is the author of "Advancing America."

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

A Goodbye

The Knothole, May 20

GOODBYE, then, to spring. Tonight I am burning the last of the logs I split to see me through cold evenings. It is still cold, but the air has a different feel. There's warm weather coming. Hylas are calling in our pond-sprinkled woods, but now only a few. Their thin sorry wheedle—half summons, half despair—certainly sounds like valediction. Do they go on much longer? Soon, I think, the purr and buzz and rattle of hot nights begin; fireflies too, and the bump of June-bugs on the screen. But I don't exactly remember. I never do. Has no one ever said a word to defend the silly nature-lover who simply forgets, from year to year, the details of his glamor, and has the joy of discovering all over again? No one will ever believe me when I try, ashamed, to explain that I have no memory for facts. But it's true, and what fresh delights it wins me.

Goodbye, then, to spring. Something changed about sunset time today. The trees looked thick and fulsome; novels, no longer lyrics. Orion, companion of empty nights, has sloped off somewhere —whether below horizon or behind foliage I don't know. After this full moon everything will be different. The plaintive or questioning voices will deepen to a booming whirr of consummation: that strong insect diapason of midsummer night that would terrify anyone who really listened. Imagine it magnified so our surd ears might distinguish: rustles, rubbings, chirps and oaths and screams; lust, ambush, massacre; to have and to hold until exhaustion and the foggy foggy dew. Man, if he dares consider these things, makes them tolerable only by his supreme and indulgent fallacy of attributing to that brute necessitous world some approximate of his own queer emotions. It is absurd of course. The savage push of their unwavering impulsion is beyond any thought he can compass.

After a windy day there was hush. As twilight thickened the dogwoods grew brighter. When the purple was already draining out of the irises, the curly dogwood blades still shone. They seemed to have caught enough light to hold it until the moon should come to refill. Bringing cream in a silver jug was my image; it sounded silly, but I didn't mind. I was thinking how much fun to go on mowing the lawn all summer. (Though I have said before, *lawn* is too smooth a word.) I am no gardener of niceties, but a persevering grass cutter. It is an employ noble for accidental thinking. Especially to go around, in the nearsighted dusk, with a big pair of scissors and clip off the stalks missed by the rotarian machine. Grass deserves close Nebuchadnezzar observation. Here and there are tufts of feathery sort, quite different from the coarse ordinary growth. They are delightful to snip; I always imagine them, I don't know why, as young poets. Burdock plants I hate to slash down; there is a good sensual gusto in slicing their thick fleshy stalks, but some pretty little creature in Hans Andersen sat on (or under?) a burdock leaf and gave me, in earliest beginnings, an affectionate respect for its obstinate vigor.

Goodbye, I suppose, to spring. As I dallied with my rough pebbled grassplots, sombrely postponing overdue task, I kept mumbling a sentence of an extraordinary book-announcement I had been reading. It was an advertisement of Dr. Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (3 volumes). No one who saw me pottering would have supposed I was thinking anything at all: but I was muttering a quote from Dr. Sorokin. *"We are between two epochs: the dying Sensate culture of our magnificent yesterday and the coming Ideational culture of the creative tomorrow."* Somehow that got into my head some weeks ago and I was chewing it. Must I say goodbye to spring, and Sensate culture; was I ready to go Ideational? Of course my own private notion was that I had always tried to meld them both. I thought also of that superb farewell to spring that A. E. Housman wrote in the brief note preceding his *Last Poems*, in 1922. "I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which in the early months of 1895 I wrote my other book" (viz., *A Shropshire Lad*). "Nor indeed could I well sustain it if it came."—And then he added, with splendid inconsistency: "About a quarter of this matter belongs to the April of the present year."

CIRCULAR STAIRCASE
(Wrenn, Lewis and Jencks, Architects)

I wonder (is it just my imagination?) was there ever in this region a more perfect spring than this of 1937? It came slowly, gently, through every soft harmony of coolness and moisture and shine. It was never burst wide open, rushed and roughened, by fierce sudden heat. It was a Tennysonian spring; dulcet and penseroso. It was a young girl spring, how secretly rounding and deepening and becoming aware. The endless horrors of the News, the forebodings of Social and Cultural Dynamics, dismayed it not. Perhaps because it was so gradual, so mild in advance, it seemed infinitely sweet. Did dogwoods always smell so honey-rich? I went out one moonlit night to study them but they were so beautiful I grew nervous:

"Life's whitest body—I was grateful and astonished,
But what was there to say?"

And *white?* how weak a word. In moonlight and cold the waxy whorls were crisped and clotted, tightened together, creamed, curded, frappéd. All were somehow more firm, more dense; the tint of Diana's breast, and as unconscious. "Paps like a bowl of cream uncrudded" said some old yodeller: contradicting my thought, but giving me his joy.

Prime after prime fresh-coffeed and methodical commuters, coming through morning savors to the train, said almost bashfully to each other, Today is the most lovely. Today everything is absolutely on the crest.—And the next day was more lovely still. B. F. was telling me that in a pellucid Sunday afternoon even the main road from Oyster Bay, which sabbatical gasoline usually takes at forty to fifty miles an hour, showed a long caravan of cars idling along at fifteen. No one, he said, fumed or struggled to pass; no one wished to drive faster. All, by some contagion of wisdom, had mind only to loaf and invite the soul. Making the last and best, I dare say, of our dying sensate culture.

I am not, by the way, suggesting any chaff of a work I have not read. I gather from the publisher's announcement that Dr. Sorokin anticipates a difficult and anxious time for the Western world, and I have no doubt he is right. He states, in sum—I quote again the circular that accompanied my grass-cutting—that the Sensate (I'm not quite sure what that

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means) phase of our civilization is ending, "and that we are turning toward its opposite through a period of transition. Such a period is always disquieting, grim, cruel, bloody, and painful. In its turbulence it is always marked by a revival of the regressive tendencies of the unintegrated and disintegrated mentality. Many great values are usually thrown to the winds and trodden upon at such a time."

Goodbye, my darling spring. You also threw your great values to the winds, profusioned blue and crystal with filigree of gold. Your wild and ragged grass is trodden and gives me my own dumb and sober delights. You have social-cultural dynamics of your own, of which I guess too little; was it my blundering neighborhood that caused the robin in the arbor to fly her cooling nest? And yesterday a yellow-shirted sporting fowl was standing sinewy on tiptoe trying to yank out some valuable string the matron had used. We have our own analogies, the woods and I; sometimes they serve as well as many volumes.

Summer will bring her own magnificence; her broad and heavy tread; her sultry purple robe and zigzag anger. But you, my sweet, were light in your coming, tender in all laughters and blessed to enjoy. While you were with us, man—if he were still teachable—might have learned something. Only your truest lover would dare to say goodbye before you were quite gone.

Circular Staircase

Answering the question asked here some weeks ago, the architect of the beautiful new Johns Hopkins Club in Baltimore was Mr. Francis Jencks, of the firm of Wrenn, Lewis and Jencks (Baltimore). Among many charming features of the building I specially admired its curly staircase, of which Mr. Jencks sends me an amusing vertical photo.

What specially stimulates my curiosity is that someone seems to have dropped a pair of socks on the stairs while the photo was taken. This makes the picture as provocative as a detective story.

Safety Campaign

If he hadn't the nerve
To take
such
a
curve
The careless driver
Would be much aliver.

OSCAR WILLIAMS.

We never let Walt Whitman's birthday (May 31) go by without thinking of the good-humored and large-hearted fiesta held every year at the old Stafford farmhouse (often visited by Walt) at Laurel Springs, New Jersey. This is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. Buist Reilly, who very hospitably welcome the pilgrims. But what always pleases us is the accidental and felicitous symbolism in the Whitman Foundation's instructions.

"Those who go down the White Horse Pike," they tell us, "turn right at Fairmount Ave., Laurel Springs. On one side are tall evergreens, on the other side a gas station. The Reilly home is next to the Fire House."

You might write a whole biography of Walt and not get in as much suggestion of his whiskered old psyche. The White Horse . . . laurel and evergreen . . . the gas station . . . and the Fire Department. It's perfect.

Speaking about Walt, the publicity agents of the Pullman Company have been speiring round looking for good advertising testimony from eminent travelers. They may not know that the finest ad ever written about sleeping cars was ejaculated by Walt Whitman, and I can give them the reference if they're interested.

It's an odd thing, I have hardly ever encountered an advertising outfit that realizes what gold-mines of beautiful promotion-copy lie around unused in standard literature.

The Test of Time

FATHER AND SON. By Edmund Gosse. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1907. $2. Oxford University Press. 80 cents.

Reviewed by KATHERINE BUXBAUM

THIRTY years of ripening thought have given us ample time to see in perspective Edmund Gosse's "Father and Son." Many who read it in 1907 probably judged it unfilial. Present day readers will admire its honesty and objective treatment; they will find it important, too, for several reasons. In the field of candid biography it antedates Strachey by more than a decade. As a commentary on a system of education now happily outmoded it is significant. Finally, it is a clear picture of English provincial life under the influence of strong sectarian bias.

EDMUND GOSSE
Drawing by Frank Dicksee.

Edmund Gosse's earliest recollections had to do with religion. The creed of his parents, non-conformists of the straitest, was one of negations. Secular reading, the drama, pictorial art all were under a ban. Christmas, word and festival alike, were shunned as savoring of Popery. Ornament in dress was sinful. The Sabbath was made a burden.

Against this sombre background we see Edmund's family—his mother, pious, gentle, with a creative talent which she used in writing tracts; his father, a scientist of repute and an authority on marine life; and the boy himself, "dedicated" in infancy to the service of God and of the rigid sect that interpreted Him.

As in Clarence Day's "Life with Father," interest centers in the father and in his views of life. The understanding of the son, who shows us the man in relation to his times, enlists our own understanding—and our sympathy. Entrenched in a conservatism, the bed-rock of which was a literal acceptance of Scripture, Mr. Gosse did not perceive the abyss toward which the crisis in nineteenth century thought was drawing him. In an agony of compromise—for the logic of "natural selection" did appeal to him—he produced his "Omphalous" theory, at which his colleagues shrugged and which liberal churchmen, even, ignored. Disappointment was bitter, and the reader of this chronicle tastes the draught. The shocked query of earnest people: "What then, did we come from an ourang-outang?" was not amusing in those days. And the picture of William Jennings Bryan, trying so lately to plead this long lost cause before a local tribunal, is not amusing to sensitive persons.

We are less tolerant of Mr. Gosse's blindness with respect to his son's education. How would a man of scholarly temper have supposed that a child's mind could be formed on such a starvation diet of reading as Edmund was given? "Never," says this distinguished man of letters, looking back across the years, "did anyone address to me the affecting preamble, 'Once upon a time.'" He was told, he says, about missionaries, but never about fairies, pirates, or Robin Hood. An innocent question about "those old Greek gods," of whom he had got some inkling, was met with a blazing denunciation of "those so-called gods," who were explained as "shadows cast by the vices of the heathen."

This moving chronicle is told with a detachment which bespeaks the philosophic mind. It was such a mind as the parent lacked. The pity is that in this family the child was not father to the man.

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Coin and Counterfeit

RETURN FROM THE U. S. S. R. By André Gide. Translated from the French by Dorothy Bussy. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $1.

Reviewed by DOROTHY DUDLEY

IT is already part of history how in 1935 after the Congress of Writers where communists dominated, the artists went over to the hammer and sickle by the dozen; and how the revolutionists declared renewed faith in the arts, previously suspect as bourgeois luxuries. Gide's ironic genius more than any other factor made this traffic fashionable.

It is as well known now how after a first visit to the promised land, he estranged these new friends by his "Return." It hurt and angered them that with Spanish liberty in the balance, his verdict more against than for Stalin's régime, was giving comfort to the enemy. Nor did his intrepid foreword appease them:

> The lie, even that of silence, may seem opportune, and opportune the perseverance in the lie, but it gives too fine a hand to the enemy, and the truth however painful can only wound to cure.

So loud the outcry against him that it reached these shores four months ago, and the English version of his "Return," published recently, is no longer news; every leftist paper had discussed his "treachery."

But, here as there, the book has been reviewed for its political import more than in the light of the issue he had most at heart; the question he asks on nearly every page: For the defense and renewal of culture is Soviet soil today propitious? It is not strange for American critics, radical or not, to ignore that issue. The very word, culture, since the day of Emerson and Howells is out of use here, having not yet been made new-fashioned. But for the French to let politics invalidate their cherished critical supremacy, is a sinister sign of the upheaval in Europe. And makes of Gide's "Return" one of the now diminishing number of books to be read by everyone who seeks the truth.

For our understanding of Gide's pinning his philosophy to communism, it is useful to remember a motif recurring in his novels: the thief made alluring. In "L'Immoraliste" the hand of the little Arab glides out to steal the scissors like a butterfly nearing a flower. The theft of the portfolio in "The Counterfeiters" seems almost to endear the thief to Gide. To pick the flower, to eat the fruit, to take the shining thing—to be nourished—isn't that the wish underlying his philosophy? "Nourritures Terrestres" and "Nouvelles Nourritures" declare it; all his work implies it. And what in his opinion blocks the way to nourishment, if not the law of property? That the privilege to ravish and be ravished should belong to a few when the richness of human soil depends on the radiance of everyone, must finally have seemed to Gide unbearable. So, he turned to a society directed by and for the people for refertilization and rebirth.

He makes it clear that he was far from being completely disappointed. In direct contact with the people, in their clubs and parks, in the children's playgrounds, among intellectuals, and especially workmen, he had, he records, moments of intense joy and passionate sympathy:

> Yes, I think nowhere is the feeling of a common humanity so profoundly, so strongly felt as in the U.S.S.R. . . . I had never anywhere felt myself so fully a comrade, a brother. . . .

But then comes the much-quoted, shocking counter-phrase:

> I doubt whether in any country in the world, even Hitler's Germany, is the mind less free, more bowed down, more fearful [terrorized], more vassalized.

Why and by whom had the plant been cut back or at least deflavored? Gide blames Stalin, but does not pretend to dictate why. Whatever the cause, liberty of mind, that Promethean fire which all his life he had seized in the face of a hostile bourgeois society, just as the Arab child stole the scissors, is not now to be enjoyed in the U.S.S.R. Everything personal, everything diverse identifying the individual, is discouraged: the revolutionary spirit forbidden; free criticism suppressed, without which "culture is in danger . . . a danger almost as grave as under the worst fascist oppression, the danger of orthodoxy." Worse than that, the people from whom he had hoped so much, seemed not rebellious, but content to be "depersonalized, disindividualized."

He came confiding to them the task "of protecting culture, and making it illustrious," which presupposed holding sacred the spiritual freedom of each individual: ". . . By being most distinctive a writer best attains universal values, because in being most personal he reveals himself as most human."

Gide ends on an upward note: the help the Soviet Union is giving Spain is a sign of potential recovery. And throughout it is his clear intention to yield not an inch to bourgeois or fascist. He reiterates his faith in common humanity as the one bed from which to generate a great culture. Not he, but the Bolshevik leaders have been unfaithful.

All good Stalinists, of course, doubt the fairness and discount the value of his reporting. But, invested as it is with the flavor of his barbed wit at its most forbearing, and with his impregnable distinction of mind and heart, I think this book is likely not to be discarded, but to serve as support to all those unwilling to return to barbarism; and as guide through the dark days at hand in Europe, and the darker days that promise to follow.

Delightful Digressions

DANCE OF THE QUICK AND THE DEAD. By Sacheverell Sitwell. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1937. $4.25.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE jacket calls this book "an oblique survey of Life and Art." "Oblique" is the correct word, but I don't think "survey" is. It is too large a term. Mr. Sitwell is not only a poet but a collector of historical and other curios. He is also a man who knows a good deal about art and music, and writes with facility on anything that captures his fancy or imagination. I should call this a book of digressions. And I have enjoyed most of them. The table of contents of the volume would seem to indicate structure for it, but if such structure there be it is more in the nature of a literary House of Usher. I do not mean by that that horrors predominate, I merely suggest the shadowiness of the implications.

We open with a hot summer day in London, and to that we return occasionally for counterpoint. From the high mountains of Switzerland we switch to a description of the triumph of death as seen in a picture by Breughel, then to discourse of Le Grand Gilles, the Pierrot —but not before we have encountered a group of very modern young women at a bathing-pool and seen them again in other nude groups. Gilles is followed by a masked ball—all this being in the Paradiso section. We then have the Banquet, or Cenacolo, opening with Swinburne dining with Miss Siddal, and drawing heavily on the research of Violet Hunt. There comes a musical interlude (one of several) in "The Goldberg Variations," then a divertissement of ballet dedicated to the muse of Tchaikovsky, and a diversion on Edmund Kean. The "Purgatorio" concerns "the fearful and hellish brotherhood of the prisons"; the book ends with a description of "Inferno" after a picture by Hieronymus Bosch.

Whether Mr. Sitwell is describing John Field's influence on Chopin, the great Skellig, the hunt of the Moa, or the Fugal Universe, he writes a beautiful prose. To my mind "The Bathing Pool" is a gem. If you wish magical writing, only to be challenged by Sir Thomas Browne, De Quincey, and, again, Pater, there is this sentence from that kaleidoscopic section called "The Masked Ball," just after a remarkable description of "the armada, or shoal of maidens" among the Maoris. This volume is the book of a traveled man, not only geographically but through the many kingdoms of the mind. If you do not care for travestissements by Gavarni you can read the history of Norfolk Island. If Miss Siddal makes you shudder as with grave-damp, turn to the sparkling DuBarry or even to the Venus Callipyge, coffee-skinned and naked! Incidentally the book has just the sort of illustrations it ought to have.

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New Scribner Books

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•

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•

All Good Americans

by **Jerome Bahr**
preface by
Ernest Hemingway

"Jerome Bahr writes like the wind. He gets right down to the point and hurls it at you. . . . As a robust talent he is worth reading."—*Harry Hansen in the New York World Telegram.* $2.50

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Always Different, Always the Same

(*Continued from page 4*)

the American, as our critics saw him, was suppression of or nay-saying to his natural instincts, and beauty and the Civil Liberties Union would cure all that. Today his disgust of life is due to the malformation of society, and when collectivism comes in there will be no neuroses. . . . Has critical realism advanced? Or has a sentiment changed its skin?

Yesteryear we were commonly told that the American artist never lived up to his potentialities. A number of villainies were alleged: a hard crassness in American life ruined Henry James, a puritan-commercial culture emasculated Mark Twain, puritanism pure accounted for Hawthorne and puritanism mixed did away with Melville, provincialism slew its dozens and the bitch-goddess success her scores. Of the generation's own do their successors now return unto them, and their "promise that had seemed so rich" is almost always shown to have been frustrated or to have come to much less than it should. Most of Mr. Cowley's collaborators tacitly assume what he says explicitly, that this promise was slain when the war dissipated the writers' hope of helping to build the socialist commonwealth. Which is doubly odd: for nearly every book that he and his colleagues praise was written in 1920 or after it, and of all the writers they discuss only one, and he the least important, ever had any belief in or idea of the socialist commonwealth. At any rate none except Upton Sinclair ever put such a belief or idea into a book. Mr. Brooks spoke at intervals of a collective life, which he never defined and which he usually replaced with a society about which all we knew was that artists would be leaders in it, and Mr. Sandburg is, I believe, a Fabian—but even such loose visions as these failed to condition their books, and if socialism meant anything at all to the others it meant that women should not wear corsets and the state ought to set its citizens to dancing in cheesecloth on the lawns. The hard fact is that there was no general belief in a socialistic commonwealth among the literary people whom this collection examines, or among their generation. That belief is an invention of their successors.

It will be interesting some day to inquire why that particular explanation has been invented but let us now observe that with this correspondence between yesterday's and today's fashions in critical mythology we reach one of the falsifying forces in literary thinking. What is the promise of any given artist, how great is it, and how do you know? If you know what it is, how do you know what frustrates it? Such questions might well seem unanswerable but both generations answered them with confident certainty. The author of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" was withheld from greatness because the pioneer tradition froze his personality at an infantile level; the author of "A Lost Lady" was withheld from greatness because the pioneer tradition ended and so she had no source of strength and maturity. If the villain seems to face both ways, it is a habit of literary thinking to be ambivalent.

Such thinking loses sight of both the writer and the work, submerging first one and then the other in abstractions, and *ignoring the world of experience in order* to build these abstractions like bricks into a theory. The theory changes at need, being now ethical, now esthetic, now sociological, now economic, as suits the immediate need. The theory changes but the *sentiments of which it is a rationalization* remain the same from thinker to thinker and, it appears, from generation to generation. Thus the present anthology describes the — perfectly objective — data which it is considering in a variety of ways but *there is a uniformity in the sentiments* of the authors. What is actually written, you see, is pretty disappointing and you may choose the explanation that pleases you from a variety which mostly contradict one another, and you may be sure we are going to change all that.

There is an eidolon: The Artist. Usually he is endowed with supernatural powers but they count less than the fact that he has taken oath and veil, he is dedicated. What he is dedicated to changes as the theories change; it may be Beauty, the Individual, Detachment, Leadership, Culture, Collectivism, the Great Society, or the Good Life. But he is dedicated to some ideal end and he serves it by producing a succession of masterpieces. Yet it is only at the café tables of yesteryear or on the flag-draped rostrum of today that any writer is ever dedicated to anything, and in the world which living people inhabit masterpieces are so rare that if one writer out of a hundred can produce one of them in a lifetime he has won at long odds. Such imperfection distresses the literary thinker and he spends his energy explaining it away. He says to the writer: thou fool—or thou coward, or poor tortured victim of a cruel, puritanical, and capitalistic scheme of things. He says to society: O generation of philistine or bourgeois vipers! He does not think of society as masses of people so absorbed in getting a living, rearing a family, and trying to have a moderately good time and build up a savings account that they can devote to literature only a few minutes now and then, and at such times prefer what he calls the literature of escape. Such a condition is intolerable to him and he erases it by deciding that in the great society, which is always a-borning, all this will be different. Once the labor pains are over no one will read *Photoplay* or even *The National Geographic;* children will begin with Waldo Frank instead of the Three Bears, only the birthdays of poets will be bank holidays, and at last the literary will be active leaders of society. Twenty-five hundred years of human history disclose no more than a half-dozen literary people who have meant much to society at large, and fewer than that who have had a decisive influence on government or events —but no matter, for that is exactly what is wrong with history and society. By tomorrow it will all be changed.

Still less is the literary thinker able to see John Doe, the novelist, as a man with children, a house in the suburbs, a golf membership, a heart murmur, and a fondness for pinochle, motoring, or talking with his friends—a man who usually works as well as he can according to his lights, the pressures put upon him, and the job and time at hand—who writes well sometimes and badly at other times, whose work is hampered and advanced by the affections and vicissitudes of ordinary experience, who by the grace of God sometimes writes above himself and by the guilt of the Old Adam is sometimes tawdry, trivial, and absurd. Somehow it is never alcoholism, a fondness for women, stupidity, or mere preference for a good time over art that makes a writer fall short of masterpieces—it is some defect in the eidolon which the literary thinker will never forgive and will understand only if he can transfer the blame to an inferior or a disintegrating society. Thus, since the world is full of books written by people whose dedication did not carry over from the café table to the ultimate performance, literary history is full of promises unfulfilled and potentially great careers betrayed. All right, how great should Mark Twain have been? Or Sinclair Lewis?

Again, as deduction from the eidolon and the dedication, and as projection of his sentiments, the literary thinker knows that books must be written in certain ways, and books which are not written in those ways are damned. The damnation remains constant because the sentiment behind it is continuous, but it is a commonplace of observation that the ways in which books must be written change not only from generation to generation but even from year to year. This step is but a logical prolongation of the original attitude, but it looks more absurd because it ends in the doctrinaire condemnation of obviously fine work. The theory is necessarily rigid; only certain ways of writing books, only certain ideas and accomplishments, can have grace. The books which abide by the theory are good, those that depart from it are damned. And among the damned you are certain to find some of the best work of the time.

Thus, it seems to me not only idle but downright idiotic to weep because "The Professor's House," "Shadows on the Rock," and "Death Comes for the Archbishop" are not thus and so. It seems to me that a survey of the last thirty years in American literature which ignores Ellen Glasgow and has only five words for Robert Frost may be as dialectical and portentous as you like but grotesquely fails to meet the primary test of intelligence. It seems to me that a system which

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will admit to grace only the intentions of Mr. Wolfe and the performance of Mr. Dos Passos, though it may have the beauty of a logically mortised and tenoned structure of abstract ideas, is grotesquely incompetent to deal with the fiction of our time. What is the trouble with Mr. Frost? Why, he abstained from the ideas of Robinson Jeffers and the techniques of T. S. Eliot, so he cannot have written poetry, for poetry can be written only in certain ways. What is the matter with "It Can't Happen Here"? Why, Mr. Dos Passos presumably believes in collectivism and Mr. Lewis seems not to. What is the matter with "Shadows on the Rock"? Why, Miss Cather betrayed herself (though for her timidity society may also be in part to blame) by not writing a different kind of book. If you liked "Shadows on the Rock," if you found it beautiful and poignant and wise, if it worked in you something of the mysterious fulfillment that is a quality of literature at its finest, why, so much the worse for you. Yah, escapist! "Shadows on the Rock" is not the kind of book that Miss Cather should have written, and so be damned to it. What kind should she have written? Well, Mr. Trilling knows. Theory has told him.

The theory killeth. It kills intelligence, and it does so by disregarding, out of the necessities of logic, the logic of sentiment, much and even most of the best work that is done. For some minds it has infinite resources of pleasure and reassurance; they derive comfort and healing from treating words as things and from erecting articulated structures of abstractions as a rampart against experience. Other minds prefer to take literature where they find it and let the theory go. We face here what may be a fixed difference in the pattern and organization of minds. Mr. Brooks once spoke of the malady of the ideal and I wonder if it is not an occupational infirmity of minds more or less noble to be forever rejecting good work in the name of an abstraction, to be forever hearing the fiddles tuning for a symphony which somehow is never played. I wonder if health as well as intelligence is not on the side that common sense instinctively chooses, the side that takes literature as it is and works with it in its own terms, refusing to be omniscient about what it ought to have been.

Be that as it may, we should all be more comfortable if the plans for the great society were altered so as to require theorists to acquaint themselves with American literature not only of yesterday but also of the day before. It is only funny when Mr. Basso says that Herman Melville introduced declamation to American literature. Anyone may be permitted such a slip, but I don't think we should permit Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Cantwell, Mr. Kronenberger, and Mr. Cowley to substitute their sentiments about the past for the past itself. They manage to box the compass with Howells—I suggest that they appoint a committee to read him and agree on what he is to stand for hereafter. It would be helpful if they would also read "Huckleberry Finn," "Pudd'nhead Wilson," "Moby Dick," "Pierre," "The Scarlet Letter," "Walden," seven tenths of Emerson's essays, and the better half of Cooper, and then specify so that we all could see what is smug, Victorian, and evasive in them. Some of those who write about Henry James should also read him. And I am willing to draw up a miscellaneous reading list, like those used in college courses, to be used as a prerequisite to opinions about the failure of American literature to deal with social issues. It would be elementary but, in the circumstances, it would have to be. I have, however, no expectation that I shall be called upon to draw it up. For theory, the most useful way of making predictions, is also a useful way of moving backward. Why bother to find out what American literature has actually been when you have only to examine your formula to derive anything you want about it? Maybe it was not that way but, if it wasn't, quite clearly it ought to have been.

Defining American Literature

(Continued from page 8)

impulse of importance except the fact of the invention of periodicals abroad. The wave of influence originates here. And it is to be noted that this intense sensitivity to what is happening, what *works*, so natural in a country where expansion has been the order of the day, almost the hour, comes from levels much deeper than the mass susceptibility which greed and love of power have exploited. That characteristic American philosophy, pragmatism, that most flexible of modern American minds, William James, its namer, rationalize this emotional expansiveness, which has repelled the conservative minds of older civilizations but fascinated the unprivileged and unawakened all over the world.

What, if anything does all this prove as to American literature? Only that it has had immense adaptability, which is a colonial trait, but that the ideas and emotions adopted have been strongly worked upon by creative minds or mass influences, whose sources have been not only native to, but powerful in, America. Democracy, transcendentalism, Calvinism as a code for nation building, pragmatism, journalism have not been merely names of movements in the United States. They have stamped themselves on literature, and have been given an articulation which if not always perfect is unmistakable, and charges our literature with a significance which has not always, or often, been properly estimated. Furthermore, this vigor of adaptation to our environment and reissue or creation under our imprint continue. What has been written here of our first century and a half could be rewritten, with different illustrations, of contemporary American literature.

H. S. C.

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. . . and indeed Mr. Cannon is worth discovering."
—N. Y. Herald Tribune "Books"

IT was in the days before the Civil War—when Abolitionists shouted from Boston pulpits, when Mr. Watling and his black mare Sheba conducted revivalist meetings in the New England hills, and when the boy, Zeke Peel, answered the urge to sway men's minds from the pulpit and left his father's farm.

Simply told, with humor and understanding, this novel is neither historical nor religious. The struggle of Zeke Peel to find himself is timeless.

"Full of charm and humor, it is extremely engaging, with a certain homely, pithy tang. Mr. Cannon does excellently by his typical New England characters — notably the reticent, lovable Abel and the equally lovable renegade, Watling. It is written with sharpness of imagery and an unforced distinction of style. It is the kind of book which one simply cannot help liking."
—N. Y. Times Book Review.

A Mighty Fortress
by LeGRAND CANNON, JR.
366 pages, $2.50
FARRAR & RINEHART, NEW YORK

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The New Books

Biography

WITH THE WEST IN HER EYES. By Kathleen Strange. Dodge. 1937. $2.50.

This is the autobiography of an Englishwoman who, much to her surprise, found herself in Alberta on a remote farm. Her surprise is the keynote of the book. Everything happened "much to my surprise" or "much to my amazement." This wide-eyed writing gives less an impression of pioneers than of an expanded magazine article of the "How My Husband and I Managed" type. The Stranges' farming venture was a successful one. They built up a seed farm and won the world's wheat championship at the Chicago International Grain Exposition (much to the author's amazement). Always astonished, she cooked, bred poultry, bore children, milked cows, saw a hail storm ruin the farm, and wrote articles for magazines.

The book is written in a pleasant, amateurish manner with every statement qualified and a plethora of exclamation marks. It won a Canadian Book Contest prize of one thousand dollars (much to our amazement) and should have been called "With the Bit in Her Teeth."

C. H. M.

Fiction

GLITTERING DEATH. By Joseph Peyré. Random House. 1937. $2.50.

Though M. Peyré's study of a torero in decline reaches its climax when it at length brings the hero into the bullring, it possesses many qualities besides those supplied by that inevitable confrontation of man with death. Ricardo Garcia would be an interesting character even stripped of the glamour of his profession. More artist than fighter, sensitive, intelligent, called "the Greta Garbo of the arena" by critics, he is forced by his insidious passion for his expensive mistress Marilena to return to the ring, though out of condition after some time spent in retirement. From the moment the contract is signed he is a doomed man, in spite of all that a devoted *cuadrilla* and a few faithful friends can do to stave off disaster. As the author admits, the case is somewhat exceptional, since Ricardo is by nature unable to remain indifferent to the crowd's opinion—a fatal failing in a fighter past his prime. Thus a press campaign against him has almost as much to do with his downfall as the affair with Marilena.

Typical of the arena or not, the author has caught the essential drama of the situation. The atmosphere of decadence reigning in bullfighting circles in recent years is also well conveyed, and the hopelessly disordered Madrid of 1934, with its daily strikes and bombings as prelude to the present strife, forms a fitting background for Ricardo's tragedy. The author takes his bullfighting with less mystical heroics than Montherlant or Hemingway, but for all that manages to make a pretty exciting business of it. Mixing the bright mondanities of Morand with the naturalistic narrative methods of Kessel, he has drawn the most from a story conventional in outline, yet building in satisfactory fashion to the truly moving scene of Ricardo's last combat. In spite of a translation labored in spots, "Glittering Death" is excellent as French novels go these days, and worthy of attention even from readers who are not confirmed tauromachian addicts.

T. P., Jr.

GENTLEMAN OVERBOARD. By Herbert Clyde Lewis. Viking. 1937. $1.50.

This is one of those very brief and snappy novels. It concerns an ordinary conventional man who suddenly feels an uncontrollable hunger to travel and who leaves his wife and children and does so. Finally, on his way home, he falls overboard by accident. What his thoughts are during the time he is in the water, that upon which he meditates, all his various reactions, and his human history, are clearly set forth. The reader's attention is held by wondering how it will all end.

It is a good enough book of its kind, but it is one of those stories that might have been a masterpiece and is by no means one. It is really light reading for an odd moment. Some of the descriptions are vivid, but the story seems to promise more than it ever performs. The publishers have, of course, made a very attractive looking book of it.

W. R. B.

IN THE LIVES OF MEN. By Alan Hart. Norton. 1937. $2.50.

In this, his third published novel, Dr. Hart presents again the story of a physician. Like its predecessors it is written with an appealing sincerity and a meticulous attention to detail that carries conviction.

It is the tale of Jim Winforth, the young medical man of today at his most efficient; thoroughly trained, realistic almost to the point of hardboiledness, indefatigable in his matter-of-fact loyalty to his professional responsibilities.

After many years' absence in college and abroad the young doctor returns to his home to take up his work with his father just as the little city of the Pacific northwest is reveling in the boom brought to it by the lumber industry. Through boom and its aftermath he advances with the town, and to the pictures of the evolving metropolis, the author brings the same careful study evidenced always in his medical references. This picturesque background affords the opportunity to introduce the colorful types that shared in the city's making. Lumber magnates, political grafters, speculators, bankers, prostitutes all rub shoulders in the struggle for a slice in the new town's wealth.

The story moves at a rather slow pace to end in an unexpectedly exciting climax in which the I. W. W. inaugurate the new proletariat era. Dr. Hart has a clean cut, direct style that places his novels considerably above the average. A lack of passion in all that he has thus far written, however, prevents his books from coming vividly alive. Too often his characters are types—or patients. And for a doctor he seems to know surprisingly little of women. His portraits of them are little more than profile sketches. Those he approves are colorless and negative, the others incredibly cold and selfish.

One may well applaud the author's detachment and honesty. But one cannot but feel that when he learns to like people more warmly, he will write a novel which will linger longer in one's memory.

M. S. U., M.D.

Miscellaneous

FOC'SLE AND GLORYHOLE. By James C. Healey. New York: Merchant Marine Publishers Association. 1937. $2.

A maritime labor strike on the East Coast and the Gulf, just recently concluded, and a similar and more closely organized strike on the Pacific Coast, including longshore labor, add to the value of the book by Dr. Healey, who has served for twenty years a chaplain to seamen in the Port of New York. While the staggering effect of the West Coast shipping strike is beyond ordinary comprehension, its effects are felt inland and about the world. The fact that a strike of seamen has brought it about, tying up an essential system of ocean transport, lends a greater interest to the lives of those men. Dr. Healey's book is all pre-strike. But it should be studied if a comprehensive idea is to be gained as to present-day seamen and their lives. Its content covers the definition of "Merchant Seamen"; Entering the Profession of Seafarer; The Unlicensed Personnel; Methods of Training; Conditions Aboard Ship; Home and Sex Life; Health Hazards and Occupational Risks; Seamen's Welfare Organizations.

The book is highly recommended as a well written document unique in its field, in fact the first book of its kind since Dana's "Seamen's Friend."

F. R.

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL. By Sam P. Ridings. Guthrie, Okla.: Co-Operative Publishing Co. 1937.

At the close of the Civil War, Texas was overstocked with a vast increase of range cattle for which there had been no market. An outlet was now afforded by the tribes and agencies of the Indian Territory and at the successive railheads of the westward-building railroad lines in Kansas. The trail over which the beef herds were driven into the north from Texas became known as the Chisholm Trail, named for Jesse Chisholm, a mixed-blood early trader in Oklahoma and Kansas. The trail in course extended from the Red River northern boundary of east Texas to Abilene, Dodge City, Wichita, and southern points of Kansas. It was active for more than twenty years. Mr. Ridings has drawn upon his own recollections of the old trail, and has also gone to a great deal of research. His book, of nearly six hundred pages, with cuts of scenes and persons, is valuable by reason of its factual details of methods, places, and prominent characters during the trail period in the Southwest.

E. L. S.

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The Clearing House

CONDUCTED BY AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION FOR A WEEK'S READING

VIA MALA. By John Knittel. *Stokes.*

PERSONAL HISTORY. By Vincent Sheean. *Doubleday Doran.*

THE SEA AND THE JUNGLE. By H. M. Tomlinson. *Harpers.*

Books for Babies

Mrs. P. J. F. of Lansing, Mich., *whose son is still an infant but who is anxious that when he arrives at the stage of readiness for the first books his nursery shall contain them, asks for the titles of some volumes for tiny tots.*

I WONDER whether Mrs. P. J. F. knows that the ten cent stores contain large numbers of nursery classics, many of them with colored illustrations, which seem to please youngsters as much as anything that can be given them in babyhood. These books are surprisingly well printed, their pictures are satisfactorily reproduced, and they are so inexpensive that even if the little fingers tear them the supply can easily be replenished. They are worth investigating; not all are equally good but with care an attractive shelf of familiar tales can be gathered.

Linette books, which are fairly indestructible, offer a variety of gay pictures with simple accompanying text; such are the Gabriel series containing such titles as FARMYARD FRIENDS, ALPHABET AND COMMON OBJECTS, MOTHER GOOSE AND NURSERY TALES, etc., and the Dean Rag Books (Cupples) in which appear BABY'S FARM BOOK, GREAT FRIENDS, ROCKABY RHYMES, BIG ANIMAL BOOK, BABY ANIMALS, etc. For a more permanent shelf there is MOTHER GOOSE in many editions, such as that recently issued by Random House, collected by William Rose Benét and illustrated by Roger Duvoisin, the Doubleday, Doran edition illustrated by Charles B. Falls, and the small collection of the rhymes with spirited pictures by the highly gifted C. Lovat Fraser (Knopf). Warne publishes in inexpensive and serviceable form the edition of all editions, that illustrated by Kate Greenaway. A set of books which could go on the shelf with the foregoing is the CALDECOTT PICTURE BOOKS (Warne) which may be had either in sixteen separate limp paper-covered book or in sets of either two or four volumes. WALTER CRANE'S PICTURE BOOKS (Dodd, Mead) including MOTHER HUBBARD'S PICTURE BOOKS, BLUEBEARD'S PICTURE BOOKS, GOODY TWO SHOES PICTURE BOOKS, etc., are too advanced in text for the very young child but the illustrations are excellent and could well be shown him while the story is held in reserve for reading aloud in later years. But now I am getting away from works for babyhood. If Mrs. P. J. F. wants a list of titles for her nursery shelf which will be suitable for her Jimmy some time from now I shall be glad to furnish it for her whenever she asks for it.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 165)

ALFRED DE MUSSET—"THE PRESS LAW" (1835)

One age a law for all of history?
Because three pedants stuffed my memory
With sundry verses, learned against the grain,
One age alone, one land must ever reign?
If it is glorious, may it glorious sleep,
That woeful age! To mine I mean to keep.

Russian Literature

W. T. H. of North Hollywood, Calif., *wants to read such Russian literature as will furnish him "with a comprehensive background of Russian life, thought, and ideas as expressed in their writings." "I have not read any of the Russian writers," he adds.*

W. T. H. should begin, of course, with the great triumvirate, Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, and Turgeniev, and follow their books with others by Chekov, Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, and Gorky. All of these, as well as works by Merejkowski, Andreiev, and Bunin are to be found in translation in libraries and bookshops. Among writers of the past few years whose novels have had considerable currency in English one of the best known is the Yiddish writer Sholom Asch, whose THREE CITIES and THE WAR GOES ON (Putnam) are impressive books which shed much light upon recent history. Erenburg, Kataev, Leonov, Sholokow, and A. N. Tolstoy are likewise writers to be reckoned with. If W. T. H. wants a history of Russian letters he might read Maurice Baring's AN OUTLINE OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE (Holt) which will give him a bird's-eye view of the field.

Help Wanted Again

I am in need of assistance again. Can anyone tell *Mrs. R. K. P. of Colorado Springs, Col.*, where to get a long poem on English history written in the style of "The House that Jack Built" and called THE BRITONS. "I have never," she writes, "been able to get a copy of it," and as a further means to identification she submits the following verses:

First came the Britons, a barbarous race,
Chiefly employed in war and the chase,
Who dwelt in merry old England.

Next came the Romans, a people bold,
Most warlike of all the nations old,
Who conquered the Britons, a barbarous race, etc.

The next verse was about the Picts and Scots across the Tweed.

Angles and Saxons from Germany's shore
Came at King Vortigern's summons o'er,
Who conquered the Picts and Scots across the Tweed, etc.

Other interesting verses were about King Egbert and King Alfred, and then—

The Normans and Saxons in combat mixed
In the year one thousand and sixty-six.

It continued down to the time of Queen Victoria.

Another appeal for information on which I should welcome assistance is that of *M. D. C. of Brookline, Mass.* She writes:

"Do you happen to know the lines that are over the entrance of the El Trovar Hotel at the Grand Canyon? Who wrote them or anything about them?

"One of the people who has worked for twenty-five years for the Harvey Company told me they never tell visitors about them—if they find them, all right. He says that the letters were sent when the new hotel was built with the request that they be put over the north entrance facing the Canyon. A friend told me of them on my first visit there last year.

" 'Dreams of mountains as in their sleep they brood on things eternal.' "

BY REX STOUT

"I recommend *The Red Box* and every other detective novel written by Rex Stout to all readers, male and female, young and old. I have never met any one or heard of any one who did not enjoy them."—*William Lyon Phelps*

$2.00 FARRAR & RINEHART

HOW to TRAVEL WITHOUT BEING RICH

Here's a new book that tells why travel is cheaper than ever before—where to go, in what season, what to see, do, eat, drink, wear. Everything you want to know about travelling—and not **how much** it will cost, but **how little**!

Do you want to know how to travel economically, and yet have a better time? How to save on tips and extras? What to do if you don't know the language? All about guides, and how to avoid them? How to choose your hotel? How to save railroad fare abroad? Where you can sleep for 25c a night? Here are 101 tips that enable you to **travel** this year—for practically the price of an ordinary vacation!

The name of the book is **"HOW TO TRAVEL WITHOUT BEING RICH,"** by William M. Strong. If you've already decided to travel, you need this book—if you haven't, you need it still more! Only $1.50 at your bookstore, or direct from DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & CO., Dept., 665-A, Garden City, N. Y.

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The Compleat Collector

RARE BOOKS: CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Fine Printing and is conducted by Carl Purington Rollins

Emerson to Brooks

MT. HOLYOKE COLLEGE is celebrating its centennial, and the Williston Memorial Library is cooperating handsomely by conducting an exhibition of one-hundred American first editions paralleling the history of the college. The exhibition, arranged by the librarian, Flora B. Ludington, will be open through May 31st. The plan of selecting a book for each year of the century, from Emerson's "The American Scholar" to Van Wyck Brooks's "The Flowering of New England," inevitably makes for several odd pairings, but this very element adds to the excitement of the enterprise. Henry Ward Beecher's "Seven Lectures to Young Men" (1844) is followed by "The Raven;" "Little Women" (1868) by Henry Charles Lea's "Studies in Church History," and Bellamy's "Looking Backward (1888) by another special or retrograde movement—Lucy Larcom's "A New England Girlhood." At the head of each annual entry is a brief statement of some significant incident in Mt. Holyoke life for the corresponding year. Thus the year that saw "The Deerslayer" issued saw also the addition of a seventy-foot wing to the main college building; the year following (Bryant's "The Fountain"), Deacon Daniel Safford was moved to bestow two more pianos; the publication of "Ben-Hur" (1880) coincided with the installation of a hydraulic passenger elevator. The whole effect of the exhibition catalogue is to give an admirable picture of the college's growth and development as reflected against the cultural background of its first hundred years. The plan is eminently worth the consideration of educational institutions who have important anniversaries pending.

Frostana

From Robert S. Newdick of the Department of English in Ohio State University, a thoroughgoing Frost student, comes an interesting set of observations on the new Clymer-Green bibliography of Robert Frost, noticed in this department April 3rd:

(1) In the section on First Appearances of Poems in Periodicals, p. 81: (a) while the "Class Hymn" is unsigned in the *High School Bulletin* it is credited to "Robert L. Frost" in a slip of Errata inserted in the June, 1891, issue; (b) the Hymn did not appear first in the Order of Exercises for the Forty-First Anniversary . . . . [p. 3] which was issued the day it is dated, "Friday, July 1st," but in the *Bulletin;* (c) before it appeared in the Report of the Superintendent of Schools . . . ., [1892 section, p. 36,] it appeared in three local newspapers (*The Lawrence Daily American*, July 1, p. [2]; *The Evening Tribune*, July 1, p. [3]; *The Lawrence Daily Eagle*, July 2, p. [2]; and (d) it was reprinted also in the *Lawrence Telegram*, April 1, 1925, p. 14.

(2) In the section on Chronology, p. 151: (a) Frost taught English at Pinkerton Academy not 1905-11 but 1906-11. In *The Pinkerton Critic* for October, 1906, in "Changes at Pinkerton," is noted the "addition of Mr. Robert L. Frost, who is assisting in the English department."

The problem of the bibliographers in the Chronology was a difficult one of selection, yet a number of the points convey erroneous impressions. (1) The first honorary degree that is listed in Vermont's L. H. D., 1923, which ignores, as probably Mr. Frost would not, the honorary A. M. of Amherst, 1917, and the honorary A. M. of the University of Michigan, 1922. (2) *A Way Out* is noted as of 1929, the year of its first separate publication; but many will regard as more significant either the year of first publication, 1917, or the year of first production, 1919. (3) If other than Pulitzer awards are to be noted, and the Loines prize, 1931, is noted, why not note also other prizes, *e.g.*, the Levinson prize, 1922? (4) Again, if Frost's election to the National Academy is to be recorded, 1930, why not also his election to membership in the International P. E. N. club, 1922?

A Rag and a Bone

Dr. George Watson Cole, librarian emeritus of the Henry E. Huntington library, and compiler, among various important bibliographical endeavors, of the great E. Dwight Church catalogue, has presented to Yale his collection of books about books, comprising some two thousand units. Princeton has also benefited by a recent freewill offering differing both in degree and in kind from Dr. Cole's bestowal, for Ralph C. Runyon of the class of 1908 has tendered to his alma mater a lock of Napoleon's hair and the red cordon which Napoleon wore at St. Helena.

Locks of hair are reasonably frequent auction-room visitors, invariably well authenticated, else they would be definitely suspect. Frequently they are preserved in the doublures of finely-bound books, like beetles in amber, which seems as sound a way as any of insuring their perpetuity and of rendering them incapable of being mislaid. Some collectors will have no truck with them, any more than with those inkwells, pipes, walking sticks, duelling pistols, or tea-caddies of distinguished provenance which occasionally insinuate themselves into respectable booksales.

There is a sharp limit to the eligibility of candidates to the company of the clipped elect. Never, the Compleat Collector believes, has the cowlick of a living notable been posted for sale. He who trailed John Steinbeck or Thomas Wolfe or Ernest Hemingway into a barber-shop would soon be enjoying the sanctuary of the psychopathic or the accident ward. Somehow the intervention of the grave hallows what would otherwise be ridiculous—what may be ridiculous in spite of all. Even more is necessary—a degree of beatification, if not actual canonization, or at least a member's card in the Valhalla of the quasi-legendary. Thus Washington, Lincoln, and Napoleon are of the company, but not Wilson or Foch—not yet, at all events. Shelley, Keats, Whitman, Thackeray, Dickens are admissible, but not Hardy or Stephen Crane. No one would accept the credentials of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Drake, John Alden—collectable hair must be no fresher than seventy-five years and no more venerable than two hundred. Female tresses, despite their admittedly higher decorative status, do not seem to count. A queer business.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER HALF BAKED *George Bagby* (Covici-Friede: $2.)	Sun-burned corpse 'neath Coney boardwalk involves Insp. Schmidt in other puzzling killings — all irking his feet, as usual.	Extortion-gang, shady "patriotic" organization, scared plutocrat, ditto gangster, and many others lend zest to yarn with lame finis.	Zippy
THE MYSTERY OF THE FRENCH MILLINER *Sir Basil Thomson* (Crime Club: $2.)	Murder in England causes Insp. Vincent and Goron of Sûreté much cis- and trans-Channel anguish before solution.	Great amount of painstaking sleuthing, not much action, and penetrating commentary on processes of Justice in France and England.	Bit stodgy
DEAD IS THE DOORNAIL *Paul Haggard* (Lippincott: $2.)	Sports reporter star and pix man pal trail slayer of gal tennis champ through morasses of purple verbiage.	It *can't* be the Hard-boiled yarn to end all of that ilk as successor is announced. Verbum Sap.	H_2S
THE VERA GERARD CASE *Joseph Cottin Cooke* (Manthorne and Burrack: $2.)	Reconstruction of actual Manhattan *cause célèbre* with Carleton Bailey, talented amateur, ultimately solving crime.	Those who recall the Vera Gordon case may possibly agree that, even unsolved, it was dished up better in the tabs.	Mediocre

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD QUERCUS'S big trove this week is the *Pen Women's Rally Song.* A publisher, who implores us not to identify him, brought it back from the Pen Women's convention in Cleveland last week: he swears that he actually heard them sing it. ☞Words by Opal Hemler (can this be our old friend Opal Whiteley?), music by Alice Huber, quills at salute and here we go, with the vox angelica stop full out:—

Pen Women—Pen Women—
Artists of creation,
Striving with pencil, with brush and with pen;
Making immortal the thoughts of men.
The wise old owl looks down from above—
His sparkling eye is the light of love.
He guides our work.
He shares our fun.
We're one for all and all for one.
Pen Women—Pen Women—
Artists of creation,
Banded together to boost and to cheer,
Bringing the goal just a bit more near.
Pen Women—Pen Women—
When we hear the muses call
Replying
Keep trying—
All for one and one for all.

☞We are pleased to see Carson Pirie Scott and Company's *Thistle Leaf,* an occasional broadside from that big Chicago store's book department, giving special praise to MacLeish's verse play (written for radio) *The Fall of the City.* ☞Among new books by Chicago authors, that city looks forward with considerable curiosity to Burton Rascoe's *Before I Forget* (Doubleday) in which Mr. Rascoe narrates his adventures down to the time of his leaving the Chi. *Tribune* in 1920.

☞We were heartily sorry to hear of the death of Leonard L. Mackall, distinguished bibliographer, who had been a regular contributor to our contemporary the Herald Tribune *Books* from its beginning in 1924. Innumerable stories are told of Mr. Mackall's acute instincts in the field of bibliophily; he was sometimes nicknamed "the Sherlock Holmes of book collectors."

☞The motto on Old Q.'s bookplate, if he had a bookplate, would be "Some poor bibliophile, who, either as a trade or as a hobby, was a collector of obscure volumes." ☞The speaker is Dr. Watson, in *The Adventure of the Empty House.* ☞Another good quote from the same volume (*The Return of S. H.*) is Holmes's remark "The Press, Watson, is a most valuable institution, if you only knew how to use it." ☞This was after Holmes, for reasons of his own, had given a reporter a misleading steer on a certain story. ☞It reminds Old Q. somehow of Kai Lung's famous method of extinguishing a fire—"by directing jets of air upon it." Does anyone but ourself and Mr. Hilaire Belloc remember Kai Lung? ☞What do booksellers remember? We often wonder. ☞We did not know, until told by Rodman Gilder, that Don Marquis's famous hokum play *The Old Soak* was published by Samuel French and is now in its 3rd printing. ☞Speaking of memories, none are so brief as publishers' recollections of other publishers' books. For instance, we find Little, Brown & Co. saying in an announcement that Dr. A. J. Cronin was "the most discussed novelist of the year 1931." Mightn't they have remembered a novel in 1931 called *The Good Earth?* ☞Paul Hampden, son of the distinguished actor Walter Hampden, has joined the advertising staff of the *Atlantic Monthly.*

☞Farrar & Rinehart and the Literary Guild have issued a joint statement announcing that the suit between them has been settled (*Trade Winds,* April 3 and May 8). The Guild has agreed that department stores taking orders for Guild selections must obtain signed subscriptions and make no over-the-counter deliveries of any selections. No cash payment with respect to the matters in suit was involved in the settlement.

☞Last week four more publishers signed fair trade agreements with booksellers in New York. Knopf's agreement protects books published on or after May 18; Reynal & Hitchcock is protecting all future titles; Doubleday, Doran is covering all trade books issued after June 1; Farrar & Rinehart is protecting active titles published during the last six months as well as books now scheduled for the fall list. Harcourt, Brace has mailed contracts to the trade in New York State offering protection on the fall list. Publishing firms intending to mail contracts as soon as they are printed include Dodd, Mead, the Viking Press, the Vanguard Press, and Stokes.

Reviewing Reviews

IN a recent appearance of this department, we quoted two peculiar opinions of Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men"—one of them a blat—and asked our readers for comments. The responses, printed on our letter page April 17 and 24, were interesting and encourage us to try again. This time we'll give you the reviews of what seems to be the most highly praised novel of the year, certainly the most highly praised since Steinbeck's. This is "The Outward Room": Millen Brand's story of a girl who escaped from an insane asylum and found herself through the love of a laboring man in New York.

Before "The Outward Room" reached reviewers it had already been decorated with jacket blurbs from Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Fannie Hurst, and Erskine Caldwell. The daily critics immediately gave it all they had. "Something to get wild about," said Harry Hansen in the *N. Y. World-Telegram.* "The story of the frightened, lonely girl in the big city is delicately true," wrote Lewis Gannett in the *N. Y. Herald Tribune;* "Mr. Brand steers his course, and Harriet's, with the deftness of a master." "Will take your breath away," said Charles Wagner in the *N. Y. Mirror.* "An exciting story.... Many readers will welcome it not only for its suspense and originality but for the reach of its imagination"—so run 22 of the thousand or so words of praise by Mary Ross in the *Herald Tribune Books.* "Original in the best, the most exact sense of the word," wrote Edith Walton in the

ENGLISH '37

THE NOVELIST AND THE READER

FROM our announcement of this course on page 21 of last week's issue one subscriber got the idea that Mr. DeVoto was going to give a series of lectures at the Columbia University Summer School. Not so. Mr. DeVoto will present his course only on the Editorial page of THE SATURDAY REVIEW, beginning with the issue of June 26th.

IN a series of closely related editorials, Mr. DeVoto will hold forth on various aspects of contemporary fiction. The course includes technical, psychological, and critical discussions of current novels and contemporary novelists.

1. **What is the relationship between novelist and reader?**
2. **What determines the reader's satisfaction or dissatisfaction?**
3. **What determines the novelist's methods?**
4. **What are technical devices in fiction? Why are they used?**

Don't miss the first lecture on June 26th

THE SATURDAY REVIEW of LITERATURE

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Times Book Review: "has a purity of poetic feeling which moves one constantly."

These opinions were echoed round the country. "One of the tensest novels readers have been given for a long time, terribly tense, and yet strangely and beautifully simple" (Fanny Butcher, *Chicago Tribune*). "It does not seem highly probable that anyone might come nearer to an adequate interpretation of a human life than Mr. Brand has come in this novel" (Wendell Johnson, *Des Moines Register*—he means he likes it). "A literary gem and a social document of significance" (*Cincinnati Enquirer*). There is plenty more, but this gives the idea.

Only a few critics had reservations. Paula Snelling in the *SRL* thought the style too simple to carry the weight of the story, but concluded: "Whatever faults one finds are traceable to the subtle difficulties in the task Mr. Brand has here assumed, and despite them he has placed himself in the front ranks among America's promising novelists." The New York *Daily News* was temperate: "I liked 'The Outward Room.' But it does not strike me as being in any sense 'great.' It suffers from what intellectual radicals term 'oversimplification.'" Ralph Thompson wrote in the *N. Y. Times:* "As a study in abnormal psychology, 'The Outward Room' may very well be completely valid. As a novel, though, it does not seem so. There is not a little of the fortuitous in the plotting. The frequent use of tremendous symbols—Death, Life, Spring, Birth, Labor, &c.—gives the whole a faintly pretentious air."

Only one thorough-going pan of "The Outward Room" has been recorded, though it is really a criticism of the reviewers more than of the book. It is contributed by James Gray of the *St. Paul Post Dispatch:* "When an amiable conspiracy such as that which has been started on behalf of 'The Outward Room' quite succeeds in destroying all critical standards among those who are supposed to speak with incorruptible authority, the still small voice of artistic conscience must speak through any medium that can be found. In all humility I am offering my little throat to an expression of protest against all the hoop-de-do designed to make this nice, rather dull little book seem like the greatest masterpiece since the Gettysburg address or 'The Adventures of Peter Rabbit' or something. . . .

"[The reviewers] have praised 'The Outward Room,' not as it deserves to be praised for its conscientiousness in the handling of an unhackneyed theme, but in terms suitable perhaps to a description of the cathedral at Chartres. . . . When such terms are applied to a first novel of great promise but also of many, glaring faults, the mind reels." Of the book itself, Mr. Gray concludes: "Superficially, many of the details are well managed. But the effect remains trifling."

This department again invites its readers into conference. Many of you must have read "The Outward Room." What do you think of it? Has it been justly praised or overpraised? Are you with the enthusiasts? On the fence with Ralph Thompson? Or in the opposition with James Gray? Postcards or short letters will be welcomed and probably printed.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

SILVERMINE TAVERN AND GALLERIES, Norwalk, Conn. Tel. 2300. An old-time country inn. One hour from N. Y. Booklet R on request.

ITALY'S ADMIRERS. Express your kindly feelings in the special Italy's issue of "Columbus Magazine," 126 Fifth Avenue.

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SWISS MEADOWS—Would two or three enjoy small cabin (electricity, modern plumbing) for summer of peace and/or work, meals served separately or at farmhouse? Three small rooms, balcony, $50 week with meals for two; $60 for three. Box 36-C.

HOUSEKEEPING COTTAGES secluded in high wooded areas near Lake Waramaug, $125 and up. Clientele restricted. Eagle Rest Inn, New Preston, Conn.

SWISS MEADOWS—Why England, when we, too, serve afternoon tea, under apple trees and lilacs overlooking Berkshire Hills and valleys and our own five hundred acres? Where more Old World charm than within our century-old farmhouse with its European peasant furnishings? $5 a day, $30 week; $25 if two in large room, separate beds. Mrs. Cornelia Parker, Williamstown, Mass.

COLLECTORS of antiques, curios, Indian relics, etc., write me what you are interested in obtaining. Perhaps I can find what you are searching for. Hulette Masterson, Paris, Missouri.

ACCORDING to Professor Stoll only grocers can detect rotten eggs. We smile. If anything in literature is rotten it is the bosh taught about the Stratford man by the Paediculi. Read "Will Shakespere, Factotum and Agent," by Alden Brooks. Then read "The Shame of the Professors" in "Reading and Collecting" for June. Later we shall have some fun with Elmer from Minnesota. George Frisbee.

WANTED: Summer home, moderate terms, old-fashioned farm removed from city or town excitement; in educated private family, for mature, eleven-year-old girl; free, early-to-bed, natural farm life. South preferred. References. Box 45-C.

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PERSONALS

CAN YOU SUPERVISE LIVELY BOYS? Type? Take dictation? Nurse young children? Drive? Swim? Posts open in California with Donald Culross Peattie. Write him Benjamin Franklin Hotel, San Mateo for interview.

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WILL YOUNG LADY interested in social philosophy and economics write young man similarly inclined? Box 48-C.

EDUCATED HOUSEKEEPER desires full charge motherless, Protestant, cultured home, not more than two children—preferably country. Box 49-C.

TEN YOUNGER CHILDREN will spend a simple, rural summer at the lakeshore home of Elliott Merrick, author-farmer, and Mrs. Merrick, trained nurse. Write for circular. Merrick Farm, Craftsbury Common, Vermont.

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WILL PHILANTHROPIC Evanstonian offer summer home, June 21-August 14 to proverbially impoverished southern girl, whose future success and happiness depend on attending School of Speech, Northwestern, this summer? In return would gladly spend reasonable hours speech tutor for children or companion-reader for shut-in. References. AMBITIOUS.

55TH, 404 EAST—3 rooms beautifully furnished. Twin beds. Exceptionally cool cross ventilation. Quiet. Sublet June 1-September 28, reasonable. WI. 2-9749.

JOB NEEDED. Preferably Manhattan. Manuscript typing, correspondence, plain clerical. 25, feminine, college. Box 50-C.

WILL SUBLET from now until July 15th circa one-room cottage on Maine's loveliest island. Box 51-C.

YOUNG WOMAN, intelligent, attractive, secretarial, manuscript, publicity experience, wants part-time work. Box 52-C.

COLLEGE GRADUATE, 25, majors English and religion, interests cultural, three years French and German, traveled in England, desires position with family of professor studying abroad. Companion and tutor to children or nurse for baby. Box 53-C.

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PERSONALS

I AM GOING TO RUSSIA, including five other countries, sailing Empress of Britain July 10th. Have reservations for fifteen, all expenses $490. Emphasis on recreation and social interpretation, not tripping. Would you care to join me? Full details available. Hugh MacLennan, Lower Canada College, Montreal.

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'TIS DARK AND COLD in these woods and the dulcimer is silent. Ivan, come quickly! The Firebird.

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Double-Crostics: No. 166

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

		1-N	2-O		3-C	4-W	5-R	6-H	7-K	8-U		9-M	10-F		11-M	12-G
13-D	14-E	15-W	16-R	17-T	18-X	19-P	20-H		21-L	22-E		23-K	24-M	25-L	26-Q	27-V
28-T		29-E	30-B	31-L		32-I	33-D		34-X	35-K	36-P	37-D	38-Z	39-Y		40-L
41-G	42-R		43-C	44-H	45-Z	46-D	47-X	48-S	49-J	50-K	51-P	52-Q		53-L	54-I	55-M
	56-K	57-A	58-H	59-Y	60-Q	61-L		62-T	63-D	64-E	65-O		66-D	67-X	68-L	69-A
	70-Q	71-R	72-Z	73-S	74-X		75-A	76-J	77-B		78-X	79-T	80-A	81-H	82-F	83-Y
	84-B	85-I		86-S	87-I	88-N		89-V	90-B		91-O	92-S	93-D		94-P	95-V
96-K	97-R	98-O	99-G	100-U	101-X		102-H	103-E	104-P	105-T	106-Q	107-R	108-B	109-I	110-G	
111-E	112-S		113-I	114-D	115-E		116-U	117-K	118-L	119-B	120-T		121-M	122-C	123-I	124-B
125-O	126-Z		127-J	128-H	129-F	130-S		131-E	132-D		133-Y	134-N	135-D		136-Q	137-N
138-E	139-T	140-U	141-K	142-H		143-A	144-S		145-Q	146-O	147-F		148-M	149-F		150-E
151-C	152-L		153-K	154-O	155-W	156-A	157-C	158-T	159-Y	160-R	161-P	162-Q		163-C	164-F	
165-Z	166-J	167-G	168-V	169-W		170-S	171-C	172-Y	173-B	174-F	175-W	176-I	177-S			

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

DEFINITIONS

A. Epic poem by Camoëns.

B. Undignified (2 wds.) (colloq.).

C. Bagpipe variations.

D. Homerian Cyclops.

E. One that is long-lived.

F. To reinforce or strengthen.

G. Wife of Elimelech.

H. New convert.

I. Granted immortality by the gods (Gr.).

J. English essayist (1784-1859).

K. Adequate.

L. Becoming moist.

M. Rumanian composer (1882—).

N. Unconvincing (slang).

O. An English bobbin lace.

P. English novelist (1873—).

Q. Depression; state of ennui.

R. Prayers.

S. High living.

T. Seethes mentally or emotionally.

U. Character in Biblical idyl.

V. Pertaining to the dawn or East.

W. Boredom.

X. Laughs to scorn.

Y. Surpass in ingenuity.

Z. Utter with a swelling voice.

WORDS

80 57 69 143 75 156

108 30 90 124 119 77 84 173

122 157 3 171 163 43 151

37 33 66 135 46 114 93 13 63 132

14 29 64 103 22 138 131 111 150 115

129 164 149 10 174 82 147

110 41 12 167 99

20 6 44 102 128 142 58 81

113 123 85 54 109 32 87 176

49 166 76 127

35 56 96 50 153 141 117 7 23

118 25 31 152 68 40 61 21 53

24 9 55 121 11 148

88 134 137 1

65 154 146 125 91 2 98

104 161 94 19 51 36

26 145 136 52 60 106 70 162

71 5 97 107 160 42 16

112 73 48 144 92 170 86 130 177

105 139 28 62 79 120 158 17

140 8 100 116

27 89 168 95

175 169 155 4 15

34 67 47 18 74 101 78

172 59 39 133 159 83

45 38 72 126 165

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

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